HEREDITARY

Written by

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1 **INT. WORKSHOP - MORNING** 1

An impressive room serving as an ARTIST'S WORKSHOP. It's empty, but evidence of frantic creative activity abounds.

We PAN across the wall, crossing a series of meticulously hand-crafted DOLLHOUSES, mostly works in progress. As we drift past these unfinished dioramas, our trajectory becomes clearer...

We are moving in on an extraordinary sculpture of a beautiful, rustic CRAFTSMAN HOME, at 1/8 scale. Its front wall has been removed, exposing its rooms in graphic tableaux. This huge miniature is painstakingly detailed. It's adorned with shrunken props/decorations (flashlights, pill bottles, shoes, etc.) and teensy furniture, all flawlessly rendered and distinguishable ONLY IN SIZE from their full-scale models.

We continue to pan/track across the miniature, edging CLOSER AND CLOSER as we drift along its tiny rooms. We finally arrive at a miniature replica of a TEENAGE BOY'S BEDROOM on the second floor.

We push towards this until the ROOM FILLS THE FRAME. The bright morning sun beams in through its window. It becomes apparent that a handsome, skinny BOY is sleeping in the bed. This is PETER GRAHAM (17).

We continue pushing gently in, remaining in a wide of the room (whose status as a miniature has now been confused). The door opens and STEVE GRAHAM (47) - tall, broad-shouldered, formal - pops his head in. He wears a black suit.

STEVE
All right, Petey. Wake up time.

Peter doesn't respond.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Hey. *Peter*.

PETER
(face in pillow)
Yeah.

STEVE
Up! Your suit's on your desk.

A folded up BLACK SUIT AND TIE waits for Peter on his desk.

2 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - SAME TIME** 2

The house is IDENTICAL to the miniature that we saw in the workshop. The surrounding landscape is blanketed with SNOW.

A bereaved woman (45) sits waiting in the passenger seat of one of the two FAMILY CARS (one green, the other blue) parked in the snowswept driveway. She wears all black, and is beautiful in a worn way. This is ANNIE GRAHAM.

She looks emotionally exhausted, as mourners do.

3 **INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING** 3

The UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, if viewed from above, is in the shape of a reverse, upside-down L.

Beginning at the stairs, the spacious hall extends in a straight line (with TWO BEDROOMS on the right - belonging to Peter and his sister, - a BATHROOM on the left, and ANNIE'S WORKSHOP at the end), only to continue to the left. This second portion of the hall features an ATTIC HATCH on the ceiling, a DOOR on the left (the guest room, recently occupied by Annie's mother) and the MASTER BEDROOM at the very end.

MAX, the family's golden retriever, shuffles happily down the hall.

Peter emerges from his room, dressed in his black suit. Steve exits the next door, irked.

STEVE
Have you seen your sister?

Peter shakes his head.

PETER
Did you check the treehouse?

STEVE
("*why would she be there?*")
It's snowing outside.

4 **EXT. HOUSE - BACK YARD - MORNING** 4

Steve exits the house to approach a very large TREEHOUSE. It * is joined to a sturdy oak and hovers fifteen feet above the * ground. Steve CLIMBS the tree to poke his head into the wooden dwelling.

CHARLIE - a plump, androgynous fourteen year old girl - lies asleep on the floor. She wears a parka and pajama bottoms. Beside her is a DRAWING PAD.

STEVE
Damn it, Charlie. Are you crazy?

Charlie stirs awake. She looks up, her nose pink and runny.

STEVE (CONT'D)
This is how you get pneumonia!

CHARLIE
(getting up)
It's okay.

STEVE
Your mom's in the car already,
we're *late*.

5 **INT. CAR - MORNING** 5

The back door opens and Peter climbs in. He leans forward to gently squeeze Annie's shoulder.

PETER
You okay, Mom?

ANNIE
(frustrated)
Where's your dad and your sister?

PETER
I think they're coming down now.

ANNIE
(backtracking)
I'm all right. Thank you, sweetie.

OUTSIDE, Steve and Charlie approach the car. Charlie, carrying her drawing pad, is now wearing an oversized black dress over her pajama bottoms and boots. Steve carries Charlie's strap-on shoes, frustrated.

STEVE
No more with that treehouse, Charlie. This is *not* the weather.

Charlie climbs into the back seat. Steve hands her her shoes.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Those go on your feet.

CHARLIE
(tense, looking down)
I know.

As Steve climbs into the driver seat, Annie remembers:

ANNIE
Oh shit! One second!

Annie runs out of the car. Steve throws up his hands.

6 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER** 6

Annie runs into the bedroom. She snatches a NECKLACE from the night-stand. It bears a silver jewel in the shape of a PYRAMID.

Annie runs back out.

7 **INT. FUNERAL HOME - CHAPEL - MORNING** 7

A moderately attended FUNERAL. (A large group of MEN AND WOMEN observe from the back.)

Before the altar, an OPEN CASKET rests beside a blown up photo of the deceased ELLEN LEIGH, Annie's 75 year old mother.

Annie (now wearing the necklace), Steve, Peter and Charlie sit in the first row of chairs. They listen as a LARGE WOMAN (60s) speaks in remembrance of Ellen.

LARGE WOMAN
Ellen was a tough one. She didn't mince words, she abhorred the sentimental, and she was *honest*. And I know that's how she raised her children, Annie and Charles -
(uncomfortably)
- may he rest in peace... To always be *honest*...

Half-listening (half-wincing), Annie's attention is drawn to CHARLIE, who makes a quiet CLICKING noise with her tongue. *This is a tic.*

Suddenly, a bird FLAPS out from the rafters, startling the congregation.

The bird settles on a ceiling perch. It is a WHIPPOORWILL. It looks down, fixing its gaze on Annie. Annie looks very disturbed. Off-screen, the Large Woman continues.

MINUTES LATER

Annie is now on the PLATFORM.

ANNIE
I just wanna say first, uh - it's very heartening to see so many strange new faces here today. I know my *mom* would be very touched - and probably a little suspicious, ha - if she could see this turn-out, so...

Annie looks down to now read from a heavily edited loose-leaf page. This is her eulogy. (Not used to reading in public, she rarely looks up from the paper.)

ANNIE (CONT'D)
My mother was an intensely secretive and private woman. She had private meetings, private friends, private anxieties... It honestly feels like a betrayal just to be standing here talking about her...

Annie pauses. She looks at the paragraph. It's very long. She decides to skip ahead to the next one.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
My mother was a very volatile woman. When her life was unpolluted, she was the sweetest, warmest, most loving person in the world - and God help the man who hurt anyone she loved, especially her children.

Charlie is DRAWING a weepy caricature of Annie at the platform. Steve watches this in the corner of his eye.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
When I was young, someone referred to her as a "lioness," defending her cubs. And I balked at that at first - it's a cliche - but I'm remembering it today because that *is* who she was.
(pause)
She was also incredibly stubborn. Which maybe explains *me*.

Scattered, knowing laughter.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
She always had the answer. And if she ever <u>was</u> wrong - well, that was just *your* opinion, and it didn't stand a chance against hers.

More scattered, less comfortable laughter.

Charlie is still drawing. Steve closes the notepad. He points to Annie: "*Listen to your mother.*" Charlie grudgingly obliges.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
She was especially strong about food. When I was a girl and I had to eat my veggies -- and somehow with mom, the broccoli was always a little more bitter, a little more acrid...

LATER

The mourners have been invited up to view the deceased and say goodbye. Organ music plays as Annie, Steve, Peter (who doesn't look) and Charlie shuffle by.

Charlie peers into the open casket to see her grandmother's CORPSE. It wears a NECKLACE with a silver PYRAMID ornament (identical to Annie's). The seams in the corpse's make-up are eerily apparent and the lips are slightly twisted.

Unnerved, Charlie looks away. She meets eyes with a smiling * MIDDLE-AGED BLONDE MAN standing in the queue behind her. He's * STARING at her - an overly sentimental look in his eyes. *

Disturbed, Charlie averts her eyes. "Yeesh."

SECONDS LATER

An older WOMAN arrives at the open casket. Her finger is dipped into a small bottle of OIL. She quickly and covertly STREAKS the oil along the corpse's lips.

Seeing this, a following mourner squints with bewilderment.

8 **INT. CAR (MOVING) - LATE AFTERNOON** 8

Steve is at the wheel, driving back home. Annie sits passenger, and Peter and Charlie sit in the back. They drive past a gathering of DEER.

ANNIE
(to Steve)
How did you keep from screaming during Judy's speech?

STEVE
Yeah, well, if *you* could...!

Peter EYES the back of Annie's head. She seems to grate on his nerves. Meanwhile, Charlie is back to making clicking noises with her tongue. She does this while unwrapping a CHOCOLATE BAR.

ANNIE
(to Steve)
How about that bird flying in?

STEVE
Yeah, that was weird.

ANNIE
That was *really* weird. The *timing?* It felt like it was my mom.

Steve nods, a look of concern falling over him. Annie self-consciously backtracks:

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Not *actually,* obviously. Just - it struck me.

STEVE
(placating)
Yeah, no, me too.

Annie notices Charlie eating the chocolate bar.

ANNIE
Hey! Are there nuts in that?

CHARLIE
No!

ANNIE
Better not be.

Annie returns her attention to the road. Steve lovingly takes her hand. She smiles at him.

Charlie, irritated, looks very tense.

CHARLIE
(quietly)
I don't *like* going back without grandma.

STEVE
(carefully)
Well, sweetie...do you understand why we have to?

CHARLIE
(under her breath)
Because she's dead.

9 **INT. GRAHAM HOUSE - FOYER - EVENING** 9

The house is unlit and seemingly vacant.

Off-screen, we hear FEET SCURRYING and a DOOR CLOSING. Max, the golden retriever, BARKS in reaction to this.

A moment later, the front door opens and the Graham family enters. They stamp the snow off their boots and remove their coats.

Max runs up, desperate to greet them. Steve bends down to happily receive him.

Charlie moves toward the stairs, still wearing her boots.

STEVE
Hey hey -- shoes off. *

Charlie pulls off her boots. She and Peter start separately up the stairs. Steve, looking down, notices dried FOOT-PRINTS around the foyer.

STEVE (CONT'D)
(calling out)
See? What's with all these footprints? I'm tired of reminding everybody.

10 **INT. WORKSHOP - EVENING** 10

Annie is at her work desk. It's a mess of paints, props, wood pieces, etc. She wears magnifying eye-glasses as she carefully paints eyes onto a SMALL DOCTOR FIGURINE for a MINIATURE HOSPICE. A figurine of an old woman - presumably Annie's mother - lies in a miniature hospital bed.

Steve enters, disrupting Annie's focus.

STEVE
How's it going?

ANNIE
Just working.

Steve casually rests a glass of water and a PILL on the table. She downs it without question.

STEVE
Still toiling on the hospice?

ANNIE
Between that and the pre-school.

There is a half-finished MINIATURE PRE-SCHOOL in the corner.

STEVE
How far are we now? Seven months?

ANNIE
Six and a half.

STEVE
Wow. Comin' up.

Her eyes widen with stress.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Any title ideas yet?

Annie grabs her laptop and pulls up a PDF for a poster promoting an upcoming EXHIBITION of her artwork. It features a photo of a magnificent living room miniature. Below this are the words **"TITLE HERE"** in bold, followed by *"The Work of Annie Leigh."*

ANNIE
This is the photo they wanna use.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Ooh, I love that one.

ANNIE
The gallery owner keeps suggesting *Your Life in Miniature*.

STEVE
For the title?

She nods, numb.

STEVE (CONT'D)
What do you think of that?

ANNIE
Are you kidding?!

STEVE
No good?

ANNIE
It's horrible!

STEVE
(conceding)
Yeah. A little trite.

ANNIE
A *lot* trite! Jesus. She won't stop suggesting it!

Steve looks to a stack of LARGE MOVING BOXES in the corner. They're marked "*Mom's Things*" in Annie's handwriting.

STEVE
You want me to put that stuff in the attic?

ANNIE
Yeah... Maybe not just yet.

11 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 11

Peter sits up in bed, holding a guitar. He improvises a clunky tune as a muted TV plays cartoons in the corner. His eyes are on the cartoons.

The door cracks open and Steve pokes his head in.

STEVE
Goodnight, kiddo.

PETER
'Night, dad.

STEVE
What you playing?

PETER
Nothing. Just plucking random strings.

STEVE
Well - that's how you learn...
(pause)
Okay, buddy. Love you.

Steve KISSES in Peter's direction. Peter kisses back. Steve walks off, leaving the door open.

A moment later, Annie walks up to the doorway, still wearing her magnifying eye-glasses. She's holding a prop in one hand, a fine paintbrush in the other.

ANNIE
'Night sweetheart.

PETER
Goodnight. I'm sorry about your mom.

ANNIE
(pause)
Thank you. I'm sorry about your grandma.

PETER
...Thank you.

Annie smiles, hesitates, and walks off. There's a loaded tension between these two.

After Annie is gone, Peter climbs out of bed to shut the door. He LOCKS it.

12 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 12

Charlie's room is that of a young artist. The walls are covered in drawings, and the desks and other surfaces are littered with different HANDMADE HUMAN MANIKINS and SMALL STATUES (all made of disparate parts - mostly found objects). *

Annie sits on the edge of Charlie's bed. Charlie is under the covers. Annie has opened Charlie's drawing pad to see a CARICATURE of Annie's mother's corpse in its casket.

ANNIE
That's grandma?

CHARLIE
I dunno.

ANNIE
You know you were her favorite?

CHARLIE
(looking away)
No I wasn't.

ANNIE
(pouncing)
Oh yes you *absolutely* were! Even when you were a little baby, she wouldn't let me *feed* you because she needed to feed you. It drove me *crazy*.

CHARLIE
She said I was meant to be a boy.

Annie knows about this. She hesitates. Wanting to say the right thing.

ANNIE
How do *you* feel about that?

Charlie shrugs.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I was a tomboy, too, you know? I *hated* dresses and dolls and *pink*.

Charlie's heard this before. She has tensed up.

CHARLIE
(looking away, quietly)
Who's gonna take care of me?

ANNIE
(mock offended)
Uhhh, ex*cuse* me - you don't think *I'm* gonna take care of you?!

CHARLIE
But when *you* die...

ANNIE
...Then *dad* will take care of you. Or Peter.

Charlie's head remains turned. Discouraged, Annie turns back the page of the drawing pad. She now sees the caricature of *her*, crying at the pulpit.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Who's this one?

CHARLIE
(barely audible)
I dunno.

Annie takes it personally, but pretends not to. She closes the book with a smile.

ANNIE
You never even cried as a baby - you know that? Not even when you were born.

Charlie ignores this.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Did you feel like you wanted to cry *today*?

Without looking at Annie, Charlie shrugs a tense "I don't know."

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Do you think that might feel like a relief?

Charlie remains miles away.

Annie pauses, lets it go, and then kisses Charlie's forehead.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Goodnight, sweetie.

13 **INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT** 13

Annie enters. She hesitates before walking over to the box labeled *"Mom's Things*." Annie reluctantly opens it...

The box is filled with bottled oils and herbs. At the top of the box is a PHOTO ALBUM titled "*Memories*." Annie opens it to sift through photos of her mother. She lays the album back into the box, and then notices a stack of worn HARDBACKS. She pulls one out. *NOTES ON SPIRITUALISM.* *

This calls back unwelcome memories. Annie THROWS the book back into the box, and PUSHES the box away.

Annie walks to the door, ready to turn off the light. Before flipping the switch, however, she NOTICES...

A dusty older MINIATURE in the corner. It's a replica of Annie's bedroom. A figurine of Annie (in her early thirties) BREASTFEEDS a baby. Standing beside her is a figurine of an OLDER WOMAN (Annie's mother) holding her naked BREAST out of her nightgown. She leans over, offering it to the baby. *Competing with Annie.*

Annie is troubled by this. She walks briskly to the miniature and TURNS it away. It's now facing the wall.

Annie returns to the door and flicks off the light.

14 **INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT** 14

Annie walks down the quiet hallway, switching off all the lights. Outside the window: peaceful snowfall.

Annie switches off the final light, leaving the hall in darkness (save for the dim blue moonlight). Annie begins to walk off, but something makes her FREEZE.

Standing motionless in a dark corner is ANNIE'S MOTHER, ELLEN. She's staring at Annie.

She looks like the corpse we met earlier, except that her eyes are open. And she seems to be SMILING.

Annie, nearly paralyzed with fear, reaches for the light switch. Without looking away, she turns the light back on.

Her mother is gone.

Annie remains motionless.

ANNIE
Mom?

15 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER** 15

Annie climbs into bed with Steve.

ANNIE
I just scared myself in the hall.

STEVE
Oh yeah? With what?

Annie pauses. Thinks about telling him. Steve looks interested/slightly worried. Annie thinks better of it.

STEVE (CONT'D)
...No?

ANNIE
Goodnight.

Annie turns off the bedside lamp and gives him a blunt kiss.

STEVE
Mm, mm - no you don't.

He EXTENDS the kiss, making it last. Then:

STEVE (CONT'D)
Goodnight.

16 **INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - NEXT MORNING** 16

Charlie's "special needs" class.

Scrawled on the blackboard are the words "*Quiet means <u>Silence</u>!*" and all the students are indeed silent as they take a quiz.

The TEACHER (40s) walks along the rows of desks, overlooking the quiz-takers. He comes to CHARLIE, whose quiz is upside-down. In her lap, she is assembling a small manikin's body with disparate found objects (wood, metal, cardboard, etc.). *

TEACHER
Are you done?

CHARLIE
(looking up, startled)
What? *

TEACHER
Are we finished with the quiz?

CHARLIE
Almost.

TEACHER
(warmly)
So maybe we finish the toy *after* the quiz? What do you think? *

CHARLIE
...Okay.

The teacher gently turns the quiz right-side-up. Charlie is extremely tense for this.

Suddenly a PIGEON flies into the window, slamming its head. The impact breaks its neck.

The classroom erupts with excitement - *"Oh my God!" "Did you see that?!"* - but not Charlie. She stares tensely at her desk, still disturbed by the teacher's interference.

Charlie's EYES scan up. They alight on a pair of SCISSORS on the Teacher's desk.

17 **INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY** 17

Peter's English class. The chalkboard reads:

Themes
- Escaping Fate.
- Relationship between knowledge and responsibility.
- "No man considered fortunate until he is dead."

The teacher, MR. DAVIES (30s), tries to facilitate a group discussion. He holds a copy of Sophocles' *The Women of Trachis*.

MR. DAVIES
So if we're going by the rule that a hero is undone by his fatal flaw, what was Heracles' flaw?

SMART-ASS STUDENT
Fucking his mom.

Some laughter from the class.

MR. DAVIES
Wrong play, Sam. Catch up. And watch your language.

Meanwhile, Peter is being hypnotized by BRIDGET (17), the attractive girl sitting in front of him. Peter's rapt attention is glued to the butt of her jeans.

MR. DAVIES (CONT'D)
Come on, guys: What was *Heracles'* flaw?

Bridget now speaks up:

BRIDGET
Arrogance.

This piques Peter's interest.

MR. DAVIES
Okay - why?

BRIDGET
Because he literally *refuses* to look at all the signs that are being literally *handed* to him the *entire* play.

Peter's in love.

MR. DAVIES
Okay, interesting! So he thinks he has control.

SMART-ASS STUDENT
Plus he fucked his mom.

More laughs.

MR. DAVIES
(to the smart-ass)
That's two strikes, Sam.
(back to the class)
But isn't this a theme we've been *noticing* in these tragedies? That by avoiding the prophecy and trying to outsmart destiny, the hero is actually running straight into his own fate?

Peter's smartphone VIBRATES with a text. He checks it. It's from *Brendan*. It reads: *"Smoke a bowl in my car at break?"*

This popped up over a website: *"ESSENTIAL GUITAR CHORDS."*

OTHER STUDENT
What about *Lysistrata*?

MR. DAVIES
(placating)
Okay, maybe, but that's a comedy, not a tragedy.
(back to his point)
Also, Sophocles writes it so the oracle is unconditional. Meaning Heracles never *had* any choice. Right? So, do you think this makes it more tragic or less tragic than if he *did* have a choice?

STUDENT #2
Less!

MR. DAVIES
Okay: Why?

STUDENT #2
(already giving up)
Because!

Mr. Davies turns to Peter, who's now composing a text in his lap.

MR. DAVIES
How 'bout you, Peter? Care to weigh in?

Peter looks up, a deer in headlights.

PETER
About which part?

MR. DAVIES
Is it more tragic if it's inevitable than if the characters had agency?

Peter is not following.

PETER
Yes?

MR. DAVIES
Why?

PETER
...Because he had sex with his mom?

Dead air. Mr. Davies gives Peter an unencouraging look. Another student picks up the slack:

STUDENT #3
I think it's *more* tragic - because if it's all just *inevitable*, that means the characters have no hope and that they *never* had hope, because they're just like *pawns* in this horrible, hopeless *machine*.

Peter now notices BRIDGET looking at him. She gives him a sardonic "*nice try*" smile. Peter smiles back, embarrassed.

18 **EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY** 18

Recess.

The dead pigeon lies pathetically in the bushes below Charlie's classroom window.

Peter walks through a crowd of mingling students. He passes a stoner, BRENDAN (17), who addresses him confidentially:

BRENDAN
Yo Pete, you get my text?

PETER
Yeah, I'm just grabbing some. I'll see you at your car.

Peter continues onward to arrive at his LOCKER. He opens it and finds a SMALL PIPE under his jacket. It's packed with marijuana.

BRIDGET (O.S.)
So you're really liking that play, huh?

Peter looks up. BRIDGET is dropping off books at her locker, which is near Peter's. Peter fumblingly retorts:

PETER
Oh - yeah. I'm pretty riveted to it.

BRIDGET
(mock earnest)
Right, 'cause you definitely read it.

PETER
(matching her tone)
Definitely. This is actually my third go-around!

Bridget laughs (somewhat disingenuously) and shuts her locker.

BRIDGET
See ya.

PETER (CONT'D)
Yeah, bye, cool, see ya.

She's off. Peter stares longingly after her.

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE YARD...

Charlie has walked to the bushes. She finds the DEAD PIGEON.

Charlie stares at the pigeon for a long time. She then fishes a pair of SCISSORS from her parka pocket. (These are the scissors from her teacher's desk.)

Charlie extends the scissors, fits the blades around the pigeon's neck, and SNIPS OFF ITS HEAD.

Charlie quickly POCKETS the pigeon head, and looks up to notice:

An OLDER WOMAN (60s) sitting on a bench, just beyond the schoolyard fence. She is gazing at Charlie, sentimental. *

Charlie gawks at the woman, unnerved. Without breaking eye contact, she pulls a chocolate bar from her pocket. *

In the b.g., PETER walks past. Seeing the chocolate, he casually asserts: *

PETER (CONT'D)
No nuts, Charlie.

This makes Charlie freeze up with tension.

19 **INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON** 19

Steve's office is large and sparsely decorated.

Steve sits in a leather chair with a notepad resting on his lap. Sitting opposite him is an extremely agitated, depressed female PATIENT (40s). Steve studies her non-judgmentally as they speak.

STEVE
And how's the anger?

PATIENT
Same. I just don't care as much.

STEVE
(optimistic)
So not as consuming?

PATIENT
(gritted teeth)
It's just as *consuming,* I just don't *care* as much.

Stifling frustration, Steve nods, accepting this.

STEVE
How 'bout the drinking?

PATIENT
You said to stop.

STEVE
And did you?

PATIENT
You said I *had* to! With the Sarafem.

STEVE
Okay, good, I'm glad...! And how's *that* been? Versus the Lexapro.

The woman tries to summon the energy to answer him. Steve continues to affect superhuman patience.

THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Steve sits alone in his office, soaking in the silence.

There's a knock at the door and a neighboring psychiatrist, JENNY (40s), pokes her head in.

JENNY
Okay, I'm out!

STEVE (CONT'D)
See ya.

She starts to leave, but then remembers:

JENNY
Oh! How was yesterday?

STEVE
Oh. Yeah. It was fine.

JENNY
(sensitively)
Yeah? 'Cause I know you were worried...

STEVE
(realizing)
Oh, yeah, well - *you* know.

This "*you* know" is loaded. Jenny smiles warmly. She does seem to "know." Steve suddenly feels indiscreet.

STEVE (CONT'D)
(correcting himself)
But no: Annie was great. Very composed. It was a nice relief actually.

JENNY
That's great...! Well, please give her my condolences.

He smiles "*Will do.*" She smile "*bye*" and leaves.

20 **INT. WORKSHOP - LATE AFTERNOON** 20

Annie is working on finishing touches for the miniature of the GRAHAM HOUSE. She places a TINY LAMP on the right side of the desk in the replica of Charlie's room. She PAUSES. It looks off to her.

21 **INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER** 21

Annie walks to Charlie's bedroom...

22 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 22

Annie looks at Charlie's desk. The lamp is on the left side of the desk.

ANNIE
(to herself)
Left side of the desk.

She exits.

23 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 23

Annie walks back to the Workshop, but on her way she NOTICES...

THE DOOR TO ANNIE'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM IS OPEN.

Annie FREEZES. She stares at the door before warily approaching...

24 **INT. ANNIE'S MOTHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS** 24

Annie stops at the door before entering. She looks very unsettled.

The room is mostly EMPTY, save for the bed (stripped of sheets), a bookshelf, and various FRAMED PHOTOS featuring members of the family. One photo: a portrait of Annie and her mother, standing side by side.

There are also CLAW MARKS and SCRATCHES all over the walls. Seeming evidence of intense struggle. Most alarmingly, a LARGE TRIANGLE has been CARVED into the floor.

Annie doesn't react to these markings. They were clearly already here.

Annie leaves.

25 **INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 25

Steve sits on the couch, reading a scientific newsletter as the stock exchange plays over the TV. He's still wearing his coat.

Annie enters.

ANNIE
Were you in my mom's room?

STEVE
What? No.

ANNIE
The door was open.

Steve makes a "*hmm*" face.

26 **INT. FOYER - LATE AFTERNOON** 26

Peter and Charlie enter, having just returned from school.

Annie appears at the top of the stairs.

ANNIE
Hey guys. How was school?

PETER
Okay.

ANNIE
Did either of you go into Grandma's room recently?

They both squint. "*Why the hell would we go in there?*"

PETER
I don't think you need to worry about me *ever* being in that room.

27 **INT. HALLWAY - EVENING** 27

Steve is at Annie's Mother's door. He LOCKS IT (by key) from the outside.

ANNIE
Sorry. I know it's irrational.

STEVE
Not at all.

Illustrating that it's locked, Steve tries turning the knob. Annie smiles.

ANNIE
Thank you.

She kisses Steve, feeling dopey.

28 **INT. KITCHEN - EVENING** 28 *

Peter is having a snack at the fridge. The PHONE rings and he answers: *

PETER *
Hello? *

Peter listens for a moment. He then goes to the **LIVING ROOM,** where Steve is falling asleep under the dim glow of the TV. *

PETER (CONT'D) *
Dad? *
(extending phone) *
It's the cemetery. *

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER *

Steve is on the phone now. *

STEVE *
(into phone, warily) *
Okay. And what does "desecrated" mean? *
(listens, then - shocked) *
What? It's been a *week*. *

ANNIE steps into the room, now wearing a coat. Steve nervously accelerates: *

STEVE (CONT'D) *
(into phone) *
Okay. All right. Can I actually call you back?... Okay, fine. *

Steve hangs up. *

ANNIE
Who was that?

STEVE (CONT'D)
A patient. Probably a false alarm.

Annie nods, skeptical. *

Steve notices Annie's COAT. He gives her an inquiring look.

ANNIE
I think I'm gonna go see a movie.

STEVE
Okay. Right now?

ANNIE
I think I just need to get out of the house for a second.

STEVE
...Want me to join?

ANNIE
(hesitates)
I think I might just need like an hour to myself. I'm really tense.

STEVE
Okay... Great. I think you should. A movie sounds fun.

Annie smile "thanks."

ANNIE
Do you know where Charlie is?

STEVE
Where *else?*

Annie knows what that means. She immediately looks frustrated.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Let it go. It's wasted energy.

ANNIE
It's below 30 outside!

STEVE (CONT'D)
So let her catch a cold. Maybe she needs one. *

30 **INT. TREEHOUSE - EVENING** 30

Charlie sits in her treehouse. She lays the severed pigeon head into a SHOEBOX. Inside this box are three other SEVERED ANIMAL HEADS. One belongs to a rabbit, one to a rat, one to a squirrel. (The heads are in different stages of decomposition; flies buzz about.)

Down below, Annie is heard:

ANNIE (O.S.)
Charlie?

Charlie shuts the box, SHOVES it into a corner, and peers down to see ANNIE at the tree's base.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Come on, baby. It's freezing out here.

No response from Charlie. Annie doesn't push it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Okay, well, I'm running out for a sec.
Is there anything I can bring you back?

CHARLIE
(defensively)
Why?? *

31 **INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT** 31

Annie idles into the parking lot of a Catholic high school.

She parks, turns off the engine, and sits in silence for a moment. Bracing herself.

32 **INT. CATHOLIC SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT** 32

A SUPPORT GROUP held in the high school's gymnasium. A sign on an easel reads "*LOSING A LOVED ONE, Grief Recovery*." The session hasn't yet started. Twenty empty chairs form a circle in the space's center.

Mourners of varying affect are scattered about, mingling.

Annie ENTERS, very ill-at-ease.

THIRTY MINUTES LATER

All the chairs are now filled. A middle-aged MEXICAN WOMAN speaks (in Spanish) through coursing tears. A YOUNG MAN translates for her as the rest of the group listens.

YOUNG MAN
(translating between her sentences)
Sometimes I even get so relieved... *
Because he was in so much pain, and by
the end he just hated himself. Always *
saying "I'm a burden, I'm a burden"...
and I'd always say "no, no," but of *
course he was... *

Annie's eyes are wide. She's empathizing with this, but it seems to also be agitating her.

FIVE MINUTES LATER

The GROUP LEADER addresses the group.

LEADER
We've set aside some time for any
newcomers who might like to speak...

Silence.

LEADER (CONT'D)
So, anybody new - if it's your first or
second time with us: the floor is open.

Annie looks very torn. She starts to lift up her hand, but stops short.

LEADER (CONT'D)
(gesturing to Annie)
Yes?

Annie looks panicked.

LEADER (CONT'D)
Would you like to...?

ANNIE
...Maybe not.

LEADER
Okay. No pressure.

Annie nods, takes a long moment, and then forces herself:

ANNIE
My name's Annie.

THE GROUP
Hi Annie.

Annie strains a smile. She continues tensely, as if against her will:

ANNIE
My mom died a week ago, so I'm just here for - trying it. I have a lot of resistance to things like this, but I went to these a couple years ago - I was pressured to come - but it *did* help, so...
(long pause)
My mom was old and she wasn't all together at the end, so it wasn't a huge blow. But I *did* love her. And she didn't have an easy life... She had D.I.D., which became extreme in the last year, along with dementia... Her husband died of starvation when I was a baby. My dad. He had psychotic depression and he starved himself. Which I'm sure was as pleasant as it sounds. And then my *older* brother - he was schizophrenic - and when *he* was sixteen (and I was six), he hanged himself in my mom's bedroom. Of course his suicide note blamed *her*. Accusing her of putting *people* inside of him.
(throws hands up)
So that was my *mom's* life!

Annie looks to the group. They allow her time to continue. She reluctantly proceeds.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...She finally lived in our house at the end. Before hospice. Not that she was even my *mom* at the end. Just a paranoid animal, scared of her own granddaughter...

A charged pause as she considers this. Tears begin to well.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
And I don't wanna put any *more* stress on my family. Not even sure if they could give me support. It's not exactly the sturdiest...
(searches)
I dunno...

She gets stuck.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
It all feels ruined sometimes. And then it feels like *I'm* to blame... Or not that I'm to blame, but that I'm...*blamed*.

Beat.

LEADER
What do you think you feel blamed *for*?

Annie looks to the leader. Pauses. Her answer comes out defensively:

ANNIE
I supposedly acted strangely in my sleep a couple years ago...!
(tense pause)
I'd rather not relive it right now, at the risk of sounding cryptic. But I *will* say that everything that happened, happened in my sleep. With*out* me. And everyone *assures* me that I "did these things" and "acted this way," so I guess I *did*. But ever since - every day - I just feel so...all the time... villainized.

We reveal the mystified GROUP. They struggle to remain sympathetic, despite their confusion.

Annie, lost in her frustration, abruptly cuts herself off.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Anyway. Everything's disappointing. So here I am.

She forces a laugh, but also cries a bit. She wipes away the tears and makes an embarrassed "*bah*" face. She then motions to the group: "*Who's next?*"

33 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 33

Peter's laptop is open. The browser displays BRIDGET'S FACEBOOK PAGE. Behind that, another page displays "*POPULAR CAREER INTERESTS.*"

Peter sits at his window, holding a small water pipe. Its bowl is packed with marijuana. Resting on his lap is an open copy of *The Women of Trachis*.

As Peter takes a hit from his pipe, his smartphone vibrates with a TEXT. He checks it.

From "*Brendan*":

Holy shit. Huge party tomorrow at Aaron's house. Bring your dick!

34 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS** 34

A WIDE of the house. In the foreground seems to be someone's SHOULDER. *

Pot smoke is blown out of Peter's window, followed by a brief fit of COUGHING. *

35 **INT. ANNIE AND STEVE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 35

Peter's coughing is heard faintly. It stops. Annie and Steve are ASLEEP in bed. Silence, save for Steve's soft snoring.

A sudden harsh SNORT from Steve. Annie's eyes CRACK open, only to slowly shut back towards sleep. But then, before the lids can close, they FREEZE (half-cracked). Above Annie is the faintest sound of BREATHING.

Annie's eyes open all the way. She notices the HAIRS on her arm, all standing at attention. She then notices the IMPRINT of a butt on the edge of the bed, as if an invisible person were sitting beside her.

Annie's eyes follow the sound of the breathing, slowly scanning UPWARD to see...

BREATH IS MATERIALIZING above her - coming from no visible source.

Petrified, Annie looks to the WINDOW to see her MOTHER'S VAGUE * REFLECTION sitting on the edge of her bed (so vague that it's disputable that it's not actually *there*). The reflection becomes* less and less discernible until it has *vanished*. We RACK FOCUS *past* the window's glass to now see a WHIPPOORWILL sitting on a branch, looking into the bedroom. *Looking at Annie.*

Annie's eyes are locked with the bird's. It's identical to the one that flew into the funeral home earlier.

Annie reaches to nudge Steve, but before she can -- the bird ASCENDS from the tree.

Annie sits frozen, staring at the branch which now teeters creakily from the bird's liftoff.

36 **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT** 36

Peter, very stoned, pours himself a glass of milk. Mid-pour, he notices a SMALL TRIANGULAR SYMBOL carved into the wall behind the fridge. It looks like Charlie drew it.

Still pouring milk, Peter examines the marking. The glass OVERFLOWS.

PETER
Fuck.

(*Attentive viewers will have noticed some tiny black particles - like loose herbs - mixed in the milk.*)

37 **INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT** 37

Peter, carrying the glass of milk and a handful of small cookies, enters the hallway. ANNIE is at the end of the hall, her EAR pressed against the WALL. Listening for something.

Peter stops to watch Annie (holding the cookies behind his back). She KNOCKS on the wooden wall, and then focuses again on listening. She knocks again. Listens.

PETER
Are you okay?

Annie TURNS to Peter, startled.

ANNIE
What are you doing up?

PETER
I couldn't sleep.

ANNIE
(awkwardly)
Can I make you anything?

PETER
I think I'm gonna go back to bed.

ANNIE
Okay... Your eyes are red.

PETER
(changing subject)
What are *you* doing?

ANNIE
Oh - just an experiment.
(self-conscious)
I know, it's weird, right? I thought *
I heard something.

Peter nods, pretending to understand.

PETER
Okay, well. Goodnight.

ANNIE
Goodnight sweetheart. I love you.

Peter walks past.

PETER
Love you, too.

As he leaves, he notices Annie's LAPTOP on the table. Its browser is signed onto a site for "*Communicating with Spirits*." Peter's eyes WIDEN at this, disturbed.

38 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY** 38

Charlie, dressed in her pajamas and munching on M&Ms, sits at * her desk. She's is finishing the torso for another small * human manikin. The limbs are made of different scraps. *

To the side of Charlie's sculpture-in-progress is the SEVERED * PIGEON HEAD. (Beside *that* is Charlie's drawing pad, open to * an unfinished STILL LIFE of the pigeon head. And on the far * side of the desk: a crude, bare stage for an unfinished * DIORAMA.) *

As she works, Charlie makes the CLICKING SOUND with her tongue.

Suddenly, a GLINT of light sweeps the room in a quick FLASH.

Charlie ceases drawing. Her clicking STOPS. Disturbed by the flash, she raises her head and HOLDS. Listening for something?

Beat.

Charlie rises from her seat and walks to the WINDOW. It's snowing outside. She stands there for a long time, her back to us. She's STARING at something...

39 **INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME** 39

Annie is preparing dinner. Her smartphone DINGS with an INCOMING EMAIL. It's from *The Asher Gallery*. She opens it. It reads: *

Hi Annie! *

Don't want to bother you, but we'd love to see where we are, progress-wise. Could you possibly send us photos of your work in its current stage? Whenever you're able! We promise we won't judge!! ;) *

Annie looks suddenly overwhelmed. *

40 **EXT. WOODS - MINUTES LATER** 40

The vast WOODED AREA behind the Graham house. It is still snowing.

Charlie, wearing regular shoes and no coat (and still dressed in her pajamas), takes wide steps as she slogs through the snow.

She gazes listlessly ahead, as if in a TRANCE. She's being drawn toward something. It looks almost like she's sleepwalking with open eyes.

Max, the family dog, follows happily behind. A FIRE is heard crackling in the distance. *Is this what she's walking toward?*

We cut to an EXTREME HIGH ANGLE - almost bird's eye. This reveals that Charlie seems to be following a FRESH PATH OF FOOTPRINTS (source unknown) leading off-screen.

41 **INT. ANNIE'S WORKSHOP - SAME TIME** 41

Annie is now WORKING INTENSELY on one of her miniatures. She looks very anxious.

Peter appears at the door.

PETER
Hey, uh...

Annie looks up, visibly annoyed by the disturbance.

PETER (CONT'D)
...do you think I could borrow one of the cars tonight?

ANNIE
Why? Where are you going?

PETER
Oh, just like a school BBQ thing.

Annie continue working on the miniature, taking intermittent breaks.

ANNIE
Does that mean you're not having dinner with us?

PETER
Oh, no, I was still gonna eat here.

ANNIE
Well - you can eat *there* if you want. I just didn't realize.

PETER (CONT'D)
No, I'll eat here. I'd just be going there to hang out.

Annie pauses. Her mind is not quite *on* this right now. She takes a moment (pulling herself from her work) to assess the questions that need to be asked.

ANNIE
No drinking?

PETER
Nobody's old enough to even *get* drinks if they wanted to.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Well, *that's* a crock. I'm just asking if *you're* drinking.

PETER
Well, I just answered no.

Annie looks him hard in the eye before accepting that.

ANNIE
...You gonna take your sister?

PETER
Uh - does she want to go?

ANNIE
(mimicking his tone)
Uh - have you asked her?

42 **EXT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER** 42

Peter goes to Charlie's room. She's not there. He calls out:

PETER
Charlie?!

43 **INT. WORKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER** 43

Peter returns to the workshop.

PETER
She's not in the house.

Frustrated, Annie throws down her paintbrush:

ANNIE
What? Yes she is.

EXT. WOODS - SAME TIME *

Charlie is still walking through the snow. She sees in the DISTANCE, almost too far away to distinguish... *

A ring of BURNING TORCHES has been set up. Within this ring, an OLD WOMAN'S INANIMATE DEAD BODY (seemingly dead) stands ERECT - tied to a pole, with her arms strapped to outstretched planks. The body is dressed in FINE WHITE SILK and wears a CROWN. It looks like Ellen Leigh (Charlie's grandmother), but it's too far away to *quite* tell. *

Charlie squints at this, barely reacting, when-- *

ANNIE (O.S.) *
CHARLIE! *

Charlie looks to ANNIE, who is running in her direction. *

Charlie steps toward Annie. *

ANNIE (CONT'D) *
What are you *doing?!* It's below *
freezing out here! *

Annie arrives at Charlie. She takes her arm and starts leading her back to the house. *

ANNIE (CONT'D) *
Are you an *idiot?* You can't just *
roam around - no coat, no boots. Do *
you even *understand* that? *

Charlie PULLS her arm away from Annie. *

ANNIE (CONT'D) *
Oh - what? You're *angry* with me? *

Annie GRABS Charlie's arm and PULLS her back toward the house. *

CHARLIE *
(under her breath) *
I want grandma. *

ANNIE *
Yeah. That makes *one* of us. *

45 **INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER** 45

Annie and Charlie return. Annie aggressively stamps the snow off her boots.

ANNIE
You're going to this party with your brother.

CHARLIE
What party?

ANNIE
(trying to be softer)
A school hang-out with other kids.

CHARLIE
(evasive)
That's okay.

ANNIE
No, it's *not* okay. You're going.

CHARLIE
Why?

ANNIE
Because it'll be *fun.* You can hang *out*.

CHARLIE
With *who*?

ANNIE
With your *brother!* With other *kids!*

Peter has stepped into the hall. He nods, as if to say "*yeah, come along*," but his eyes are very uninviting.

CHARLIE
(as if to challenge Peter)
...Fine.

ANNIE
Great. You're going.
(to Peter)
She's going with you.

PETER
Great.

ANNIE
And that *really* means no drinking.

PETER
Yeah: I *really* wasn't going to.

46 **EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING** 46

The sun has set. A FULL MOON glows pale-blue over a lonely highway.

The Graham family car (the green one) FLASHES past.

47 **INT. GRAHAM FAMILY CAR - CONTINUOUS** 47

Peter is tense at the wheel. He drives the speed limit.

Peter's eyes drift to the REAR VIEW MIRROR... Charlie, sitting in the back, CLICKS her tongue.

Peter's eyes narrow resentfully back onto the road.

The car passes a TELEPHONE POLE. Just an average telephone pole. But we HOLD on it for a second longer than feels necessary.

48 **EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT** 48

A large, modern house. The windows feature glimpses of a big party, filled with circulating kids.

Peter and Charlie walk up the driveway. Charlie, suddenly very nervous, starts slowing down.

CHARLIE
Maybe I don't have to go in...

Peter stops.

PETER
Why? What's wrong?

CHARLIE
It's okay. I can just stay out here.

PETER
Charlie, *you're* the one who wanted to come.

CHARLIE
(not looking at him)
So *you* just go. I'll be out here.

PETER
Charlie: If you don't come in, I have to take you back home, and that'll take an *hour*.

49 **INT. PARTY HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER** 49

The house is bustling. In the KITCHEN, two girls pull a CAKE from the oven. Another girl (working on the frosting) CHOPS up loads of WALNUTS on a chopping board.

ECU of the nuts being brutalized.

In the **LIVING ROOM**, Peter stands awkwardly with Charlie. Charlie grips her drawing pad.

AARON (17), a preppy-looking kid, walks suspiciously over to Peter. This is Aaron's house.

AARON
Hey.

PETER
Hey. Nice house.

AARON
How did *you* hear about this?

PETER
Text.

Aaron nods, annoyed. He takes an aggressive sip of his drink. Peter is uncomfortable.

PETER (CONT'D)
(forcing conversation)
Your parents are out of town?

AARON
My asshole brother's in charge. This is *his* thing.

Peter suddenly spots BRIDGET across the room. She sits on the COUCH, obviously inebriated, nursing a beer. *Completely alone*.

AARON (CONT'D)
You didn't bring beers or anything, did you?

Peter turns back to Aaron, very impatient now.

PETER
What? No.
(first thing that comes to mind)
I actually have to go to the bathroom.

Aaron nods "*yeah, whatever.*" Peter, already backing away, turns to Charlie.

PETER (CONT'D)
Stay here one second, okay? I'm just going to the bathroom.

Peter starts walking. Charlie immediately follows. Peter feigns a trajectory toward the bathroom just behind Bridget. As he walks, he pretends to notice her. He affects a surprised face.

PETER (CONT'D)
Whoa, hey! What's up?

BRIDGET
Oh. Hey.

Peter steps toward her. A brief pause.

PETER
How's the party?

BRIDGET
(sarcastic)
Why? You wanna know if you should come?

PETER
Uh - yeah. What do you think?

BRIDGET
(shrugs)
Whatever.

PETER
Okay, maybe I will.

BRIDGET
Okay, I'll see you here.

Another awkward pause.

PETER
Hey, so I'm finally actually reading that play.

BRIDGET
I thought you read it twice.

PETER
(remembering, laughs)
Right. So I finally read it a *third* time.

Peter laughs. Another smiling, awkward pause.

PETER (CONT'D)
Do you smoke at all?

BRIDGET
Which one?

Peter pinches into his pocket. He reveals the top of a rolled-up BAG OF MARIJUANA.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
(not seeing)
Is that tobacco or weed?

PETER
Really *awesome* weed.

Bridget considers, and then:

BRIDGET
("why not?")
I could get more high.

She stands up.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
The other room has a bong.

Bridget gestures for him to follow her. Peter starts to walk, but then notices Charlie following him.

PETER
Hey. You wanna stay out here for a second?

CHARLIE
Nope.

PETER
Charlie: please: Only for two minutes and then we can hang out. You can draw.

Bridget is already at the DOOR to the other room. She looks expectantly at Peter, who turns again (desperately) to Charlie.

PETER (CONT'D)
Please Charlie, I promise. I just need to do something really quick.

Peter then SEES something.

PETER (CONT'D)
Oh shit. Look:

He's pointing at the KITCHEN. The teen girls are now cutting into a fresh CHOCOLATE CAKE. They hand slices around.

PETER (CONT'D)
They're giving out chocolate cake.

CHARLIE
Not to everyone.

PETER (CONT'D)
Yes they are. It's a party.

CHARLIE
I don't know anyone.

PETER
Nobody does. Just walk over, stand there, and they'll give you one.

Peter starts walking off, still facing Charlie.

PETER (CONT'D)
You should hurry, they're gonna run out, I'll be right back! Hurry!

Peter rushes over to Bridget as she OPENS the door to the other room. Charlie looks nervously to the kitchen.

50 **INT. OTHER ROOM - CONTINUOUS** 50

Two BOYS - one Hispanic and one blonde - are in the room, watching videos on a tablet. Bridget enters and immediately addresses them.

BRIDGET
Hey guys, Peter has weed.

The boys turn to Peter. Peter immediately deflates.

HISPANIC BOY (O.S.)
Sativa or indica?

51 **INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME** 51

Charlie steps into the doorway. Extremely shy. Her eyes are magnetized to the CHOCOLATE CAKE as the girls continue handing out slices.

One GIRL notices Charlie's fixed eyes. She warmly offers Charlie a slice. Charlie accepts without looking her in the eye.

CHARLIE
Thanks.

Charlie turns, digging into the cake. (Nuts are clearly and visibly a key ingredient.)

52 **INT. OTHER ROOM - SAME TIME** 52

Peter sits on the bed, beside Bridget. He packs marijuana into the bowl of a large bong.

BRIDGET
That was your sister, right?

PETER
Yeah. Charlie.

Peter's cell phone VIBRATES.

HISPANIC BOY
(to Peter)
Is your sister hot?

Peter checks the cell. It's ANNIE calling. Tense, he tucks the phone back into his pocket.

BRIDGET
I actually saw her drawing me last week.

PETER
Oh yeah?

BRIDGET
Yeah, she made me look crazy.

PETER
That's Charlie.

Peter's phone VIBRATES again. A yellow "*Message Waiting*" light blinks. Annie has left a VOICEMAIL.

53 **INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME** 53

Charlie walks around, holding an empty plate, her lips covered in chocolate. She stops for a moment to SWALLOW. She pauses, then swallows again. She looks slightly concerned.

Charlie goes to a stack of RED CUPS and pulls one.

She goes to the kitchen faucet and draws herself a cup of water.

54 **INT. ANNIE'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT** 54

Annie is working on the miniature of the Graham house. She plants a freshly-painted FIGURINE of a ghostly old woman in a bathrobe (clearly Annie's MOTHER) in the upstairs hall. The figurine looms outside the open door of the master bedroom replica, where figurines of Annie and Steve are asleep in bed.

55 **INT. PARTY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT** 55

The party is still in full swing.

Charlie has found her way onto the COUCH and is now assembling * a small manikin from disparate parts (from her pocket). Her * cheeks look pink and slightly INFLAMED. *An allergic reaction to the cake?* It looks like she's on the verge of throwing up, but she keeps her concentration on the manikin. *

A concerned BOY (16) approaches Charlie. Not recognizing that she's a girl:

CONCERNED BOY (O.S.)
Hey dude, you okay? You want some water?

Charlie doesn't even look up.

CHARLIE
I'm okay.

CONCERNED BOY
You sure?

CHARLIE
Mm-hmm.

The Boy hesitantly walks off.

Charlie does NOT look good.

56 **INT. OTHER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 56

Peter is drawing an impressive bong hit.

The door is OPENED by Charlie.

CHARLIE
Peter?

This is just as Peter finishes inhaling. He COUGHS up smoke.

PETER
(like a chimney)
Charlie!

Peter immediately hides the bong behind his legs and looks to Charlie, affecting casualness.

PETER (CONT'D)
(still spouting smoke)
What's up?

Charlie looks scared.

PETER (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

CHARLIE
It's hard to breathe.

Charlie's voice is cracked and strange.

PETER
What do you mean?

CHARLIE
(tearing up)
My tongue is getting bigger.

HARD CUT TO:

57 **EXT. CAR - NIGHT** 57

A distraught Peter pulls Charlie to the car. Charlie's eyes bulge and her face is pitch-red. She seems UNABLE TO BREATHE.

Peter desperately opens the back door, guides Charlie in, slams the door, and runs to the driver side of the car.

58 **INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT** 58

Peter speeds down the empty HIGHWAY. In the back seat, Charlie GASPS and gurgles for breath. She KICKS at the door and GRASPS at her throat. Tears of pain stream down her face.

Peter ACCELERATES. Speeding from 60 MPH to 65.

PETER
You're okay, Charlie! We're going to the hospital!

Charlie frantically rolls down her window. Desperate for air.

Peter continues accelerating. 70 MPH.

Charlie forces her head through the BACK PASSENGER WINDOW. She GASPS for breath, but her throat is totally closed. She can't even scream.

Peter continues accelerating. 75 MPH.

Charlie sticks her squealing head even farther out the window.

Peter continues accelerating. 80... 85... But THEN--

A grisly DEER CARCASS, smeared across the road, appears in the car's headlights.

Peter SWERVES out of the way.

CHARLIE'S HEAD, flailing out of the window, COLLIDES FACE-FIRST WITH A TELEPHONE POLE. The impact is so great that Charlie's head is RIPPED OFF its shoulders.

The decapitated head SAILS silently in the car's wake.

Peter STOMPS on the brakes. The car SQUEALS to an ear-splitting halt.

The frozen car chugs quietly. Suspended in time.

Peter sits motionless. Paralyzed. His eyes are fixed on the road in front of him.

In the SIDE-VEW MIRROR, the dead deer (thirty feet back) is faintly visible in the car's brake lights. Bathed in red.

Peter doesn't dare look back. His foot is jammed into the brake.

In the back seat, Charlie sits headless. A torso.

Peter's EYES begin to stray toward the REAR-VIEW MIRROR, but they STOP before they get there. Peter can't look.

Peter reaches for the rear-view mirror and subtly turns it AWAY.

The "*Voicemail Waiting*" light (from Peter's cell) blinks through the fabric of his jeans pocket.

A long moment of silence, and then...

Peter's foot slowly eases OFF the brake pedal.

The car begins to slowly idle forward.

Peter, eyes locked on the road ahead, allows the car to slowly pick up speed. His demeanor suggests that he's in great denial. As if he's saying to himself "*it's okay, nothing happened*."

The car drives onward. The headless torso rattles gently in the back seat.

59 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - NIGHT** 59

The car idles quietly into the driveway. It PARKS beside the other family car, but the engine continues humming.

The driver door opens, setting off the dull DING-DING-DING of the "door open/engine on" alarm. After a long pause, the engine is turned off. Peter steps out, as if in a dream state.

He walks stiffly away from the car and into the house.

60 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 60

Peter stalks woodenly through the hall. He walks into his bedroom, leaving Annie and Steve to their sleep.

Peter goes to bed, his door left open.

61 **INT. BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING** 61

The next morning.

CLOSE-UP on Peter's face, turned halfway into his pillow. His eyes are wide open.

Downstairs, we hear Annie pulling on her coat.

ANNIE (V.O.)
I'm running out for some balsa wood. You want anything?

STEVE (V.O.)
I'm good, baby. Drive safe.

ANNIE (V.O.)
Okay! Back in twenty!

The front door is heard opening and shutting. We then hear: Annie walking to the car. The car door opening. Annie beginning to climb in. And then... Silence. This is followed by...

A horrible SCREAM, shrill and almost inhuman-sounding, issues from outside. Peter's eyes WIDEN. We hear Annie staggering backwards and falling down. Laboured breathing gives way to paralyzed silence. This is finally broken by another blood-curdling SHRIEK, which prompts a HARD CUT TO:

62 **EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING** 62

CHARLIE'S HEAD rests by the side of the road. The nose is completely smashed in. One eye is pitch red and the other is milky and opaque. The head is completely covered in ANTS.

The halted shriek (from the last shot) ECHOES OFF into the wretched silence of *this* shot.

The sound of THUNDER bridges our cut to:

63 **INT. GRAHAM HALLWAY - NIGHT** 63

A STORM rages outside.

Annie and Steve's bedroom door is cracked open. We barely see ANNIE lying in bed, WEEPING and MOANING. Steve, sitting on the bed, consoles her. He tries to feed her a pill.

ANNIE
NO! I can't! I can't! I just wanna die!... I can't.

Steve rubs her head as she sinks into a more placid despair.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...It hurts too much. I just need to die.

And then more feelings come SURGING up. She MOANS an anguished moan.

We reveal PETER, standing paralyzed on the stairs, LISTENING. His mother's cries shred at his nerves.

ANNIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
CHARLIE!!!

64 **EXT. CEMETERY - DAY** 64

An overcast day. A sad gathering of mourners. Annie, Peter and Steve stand lost among them.

We are at a distance. The COFFIN (in profile) is being lowered into the ground. We are booming down to FOLLOW the sinking casket (as though we're tied to it), and as the coffin descends into the earth, *so do we*. We slowly creep down, losing sight of the cemetery and the mourners. We continue tracking down along the DIRT and the EARTHWORMS and the WEEDS, sinking deeper and deeper into the dark, wet soil. Soon we are swallowed up again in **BLACK.**

65 **INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON** 65

THE WAKE. Everything seems slightly opaque, as if seen through glass. Glossed over by grief.

People stand uneasily and talk in hushed tones.

STEVE stands in a daze, politely (but absently) accepting condolences.

MOURNER
Whatever you need, or Annie or Peter - you *call* us. You understand?

STEVE
Thank you, Dave.

MOURNER
I *mean* it. You *can't* let yourself be swallowed up.

66 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 66

Annie lies in bed, facing the wall. Her back is to us.

67 **INT. LIBRARY - SAME TIME** 67

Peter stands (hiding?) in the family library, anxiously massaging his CELL PHONE with his thumb. He looks completely battered by trauma and self-loathing.

He observes the wake in the adjacent living room through the distortion of the library's textured glass door. He watches Steve shake someone's hand.

A MAN (40s) steps into the library, not expecting to find Peter.

MAN
(surprised)
Peter. How are you?

Peter smiles politely, but can't answer. His eyes look almost deranged.

MAN (CONT'D)
Can I get you anything?

PETER
I'm just gonna use the bathroom.

MAN
Okay.

As Peter walks stiffly past, smiling his forced smile, the Man awkwardly adds:

MAN (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry for your loss.

PETER
(exiting)
Thank you.

68 **INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS** 68

Peter hastily enters the bathroom and LOCKS the door.

He stands frozen for a moment, battling panic. The sounds of the wake persist in the other room.

Peter turns on the SINK to create white noise.

69 **INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING** 69

The remaining mourners are slowly filtering out. Steve politely ushers them, thanking them for coming.

Soon, everyone's gone. Steve just stands there, in the middle of the room. Lost.

70 **INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER** 70

Steve goes to the bathroom door. Tries to open it. It's LOCKED. The running sink is faintly heard.

Steve pauses, then knocks gently.

STEVE
Peter?

No answer.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Steve grabs a tumbler of WHISKEY. He hesitates before pouring himself a glass. He lifts it to his mouth, but hesitates again. He sets the glass down. Heavy.

71 **INT. BATHROOM - SAME TIME** 71

Peter sits on the edge of the tub. The sink is still running. He holds his cell to his ear, listening to VOICEMAIL.

ROBOTIC FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
You have one saved message. First saved message:

ANNIE (V.O.)
Hi sweetheart, it's mom. Just calling to make sure that you and Charlie are okay and having a good time at the BBQ. All right. Have lots of fun and be safe. Love you both!

Click.

ROBOTIC FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
To listen to this message again, press four.

72 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 72

Steve approaches his bedroom, but STOPS at the open door.

Annie is no longer in bed. The sheets have been dragged halfway off the mattress (presumably by Annie's feet when she left).

73 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 73

Charlie's lonely bedroom. Everything is as it was.

The door OPENS. It's Steve. He stands at the door, taking the room in. After a moment, he steps inside.

MOMENTS LATER

Steve sits on Charlie's bed. He has pulled up Charlie's DRAWING PAD.

Steve opens the pad. He flips slowly through the pages. He takes care to really *look* at the drawings. As if appreciating them for the first time.

Steve passes several drawings of severed animal heads (including those of the rabbit, the rat and the cat, which we saw in Charlie's shoebox). Steve then comes to Charlie's half-finished drawing of the pigeon head. He studies it, and then turns the page to discover...a BLANK PAGE. <u>There are no more drawings.</u>

The floodgates open. Steve WEEPS.

74 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 74

Charlie's bedroom is EMPTY again. It's snowing outside.

The door is open, and the hallway's lights are off.

Framed by the doorway, Peter walks past, determinedly <u>not</u> looking into the room.

75 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 75

Peter enters. Without changing out of his clothes, he climbs into bed. The ALARM CLOCK reads ***10:10 PM***.

He turns to his side and gazes out the WINDOW. The imposing TREEHOUSE looms just outside. He stares at it.

LATER

Peter rolls huffily from his stomach to his back, unable to sleep. He turns to the ALARM CLOCK. It now reads ***1:32 AM***.

A beat, and then Peter climbs out of bed, gathers his blanket and pillow, and leaves the room.

76 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER** 76

Peter, wearing his parka and an Elmer Fudd hat, emerges from the back door of the house. He carries his blanket and pillow through the light snowfall, heading for the TREEHOUSE.

He notes Charlie's SHOEBOX near the base of the tree (having been dropped from the treehouse?). Flies are audible inside, and Peter recoils from the smell.

Peter grips the tree's climbing handles and scales the tree.

77 **INT. TREEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS** 77

Peter climbs in. He lays out his blanket and lies down, positioning his pillow under his head. Now situated, he begins to close his eyes, but before they can shut, he SENSES something behind him. He slowly look back to SEE:

ANNIE IS SLEEPING IN THE CORNER, bundled up in blankets.

Startled, Peter STAGGERS out of his blanket, GRABS his things, and rushes frantically out of the treehouse. In his haste, his foot SLIPS OFF one of the wet climbing handles. He falls to land HARD on his back.

In pain, Peter rises and limps back toward the house.

WE SLOWLY DISSOLVE FROM THIS TO...

78 **INT. CLASSROOM - DAY** 78

Peter sits in the back of class as a teacher drones on at the blackboard. The teacher's voice is distant and vague, as if heard from UNDER WATER.

Peter's EYES are busy with nagging, obsessive thoughts. They narrow upward to his right.

We flash briefly to an **INSERT** of the family car's REAR VIEW MIRROR (from Peter's POV) on the night of the accident. The mirror is in focus, but whatever's in the BACK SEAT (Charlie's headless body) is blurry and just out of the mirror's view.

We return to the CLASS. Peter snaps out of his reverie to see BRIDGET looking at him. Their eyes briefly MEET before she quickly turns back to the teacher.

Peter's eyes HARDEN.

79 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE = DAY** 79

Annie pulls the MAIL out of the box. Among the letters is a BROCHURE. It reads "*Calling All Skeptics!*" Below that: *"A PUBLIC SEANCE to be conducted by famed spiritual medium Suzanne Marlowe!"*

Annie goes PALE at the sight of this. She looks around, as if suddenly paranoid that she's being watched.

80 **INT. WORKSHOP - DAY** 80

Annie is at work, trying to make progress on the HOSPICE MINIATURE. Her eyes are numb. She looks exhausted. She turns in her swivel-chair to face the miniature of the GRAHAM HOUSE. She stares at it.

Off-screen, the front door is heard UNLOCKING. Annie looks in the direction of the noise.

81 **INT. FOYER - SAME TIME** 81

The front door opens and Steve enters.

STEVE
Annie?!

Max runs up to greet Steve, his tail wagging excitedly.

82 **INT. WORKSHOP - SAME TIME** 82

Annie goes to the door. Steve is heard scaling the stairs. Before he can reach the top, Annie silently eases the door shut.

83 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 83

The workshop door quietly CLOSES *just* before Steve appears at the top of the stairs. He approaches the workshop.

He knocks on the door.

No answer.

He eases the door open. Annie "works" with her back to the door. She's now wearing HEADPHONES, "listening" to classical music.

Steve smiles sadly and closes the door, leaving Annie to her work.

84 **INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER** 84

Steve enters the kitchen. Mail waits on the kitchen island. He finds the BROCHURE for the public seance.

He pauses, a lump in his throat. He then DUMPS it in the trash.

In the b.g., Annie CROSSES the doorway. Steve doesn't see.

85 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON** 85

Annie sits in the blue family car, parked in the driveway. (*The green car - the "accident" car - is now permanently gone.*) Annie is trying to work up the nerve to start the engine. Then, in the SIDE-VIEW MIRROR, she sees:

Peter rides his BICYCLE up the driveway. He arrives at the front porch, but stays on the bike. He doesn't see Annie.

Annie has TENSED UP. She sits motionless for fear of being seen, eyes LOCKED on Peter. He stands for a long time at the front door, preparing to face his family.

Annie watches as Peter continues to gather himself. He finally takes a decisive breath, gets off the bike, and quietly enters the house.

Annie remains tense. She turns on the car's IGNITION.

86 **EXT. CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - EVENING** 86

Annie idles into the parking lot of the HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM from earlier. Outside, the same SUPPORT GROUP is gathering.

Annie pulls into a spot. Turns off the ignition. She stares at the gymnasium door. Watches tensely as people solemnly enter. She doesn't move.

After a long internal debate, Annie finally STARTS the car back up, and begins to drive off. As she approaches the exit, an OLDER WOMAN (late 60s) runs suddenly - and merrily - into the * headlights, flagging Annie down. Annie BRAKES.

The woman circles over to Annie's window. Annie hesitantly rolls it down.

OLDER WOMAN
Hi! Hello. Sorry to chase you down.
(awkwardly)
Were you not coming in?

ANNIE
(cornered)
I, no, I just - forgot something.

OLDER WOMAN
Okay, sorry, I just, I recognized you from a few months ago. You were here because your mother?

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Oh...

OLDER WOMAN
I feel crazy now. Sorry! I'm Joan.

ANNIE
(feeling trapped)
Hi.

JOAN
Are you - feeling any better?

ANNIE
What?

JOAN
Your mother...?

ANNIE
What? *No.* That's not... My daughter was killed.

JOAN
Oh. My God. I'm so, so sorry.

Brief, heavy silence. Joan stammeringly offers:

JOAN (CONT'D)
Would you like to come in with me? Or we can even just get a coffee. There's a place down the street.

ANNIE
I'm sorry. Really. Thank you.
(gesturing that she needs to leave)
I really did forget something.

Joan hesitantly offers:

OLDER WOMAN
My son died.

ANNIE
Oh...! I'm so sorry.

Joan smiles tightly, heartbroken.

JOAN
How old was yours?

Annie looks like she's being held hostage.

ANNIE
(pained to say it)
Fourteen.

JOAN
Oh God, that's awful!
(matter of fact)
My son and my grandson drowned. Four months ago. The little one was seven.

ANNIE
(horrified)
Oh my God.

JOAN
I've been coming here for a month now, and it *has* helped. I just wanted to say. It has. It doesn't make it easier - *obviously*. But sometimes it just, makes it less lonely.

ANNIE
(awkwardly)
Okay...

JOAN
And I'm gonna embarrass myself now, but if you ever need someone to talk to...

Joan writes her PHONE NUMBER onto a piece of paper.

JOAN (CONT'D)
'Cause we all do.

She hands Annie the phone number.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Just if you need it.

ANNIE
Okay. Thank you. Really.

Annie is moved, despite her discomfort. Joan walks off, giving a warm little wave.

87 **INT. FOYER - NIGHT** 87

Annie lumbers in. She pulls off her snow boots.

88 **INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 88

Steve is asleep in an armchair, bathed in the dim glow of the muted TV. Annie appears in the doorway.

ANNIE
Hey.

STEVE
(waking up)
Oh! Hey.

ANNIE
I'm going to bed.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Where were you?

ANNIE
At the movies. I'm going to bed.

STEVE
I'll come with you.

ANNIE
(put off)
...Okay.

Annie leaves the doorway.

STEVE
And can you please let me *know* when you're going to the movies? I was *worried*.

89 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 89

Annie and Steve are in bed. Annie's back is to Steve. Neither is asleep.

Steve gently SNUGGLES UP to Annie, but she is like stone. He self-consciously touches her hip. She recoils.

Steve backs off. There is a long moment of tension, and then Annie RISES from bed.

ANNIE
I'm gonna be right back.

She gathers a blanket, which is bundled on the room's armchair.

STEVE
You're *not* coming right back.
You're taking the blanket.

ANNIE
I can't sleep.

STEVE
Annie: it's freezing outside.

ANNIE
The heater's up there.

Steve wants to fight this, but Annie is clearly anxious to avoid a "conversation."

STEVE
...Okay.

ANNIE
Is that okay?

STEVE
("what am I supposed to say?")
Yeah. Fine. Come back if you get cold.

ANNIE
I just need to sleep.

Annie leaves.

90 **INT. TREEHOUSE - NIGHT** 90

We push in on an ominous WIDE of Annie lying asleep in Charlie's treehouse. Two LARGE HEATERS have been set up on either side of her. They burn a BRIGHT ORANGE.

91 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 91

Peter lies in bed, awake. Outside his window, Charlie's treehouse emits an orange glow.

A CLICKING SOUND (like Charlie's tongue-clicking) is suddenly heard in the room. Peter FREEZES, listening for it. After a moment, there's another CLICK.

Peter BOLTS up in bed. His eyes frenziedly scan the room. He fixes on a DARK CORNER. A HOODIE hangs on the wall, and for a brief moment, it looks *almost* like a standing person.

Peter continues listening intently for another click...

Silence. It has stopped.

92 **INT. WORKSHOP - THE NEXT DAY** 92

Outside, a beautiful day.

Inside, Annie is hard at work. Her eyes are intense - furious even - as she carefully paints a TOY CAR (a replica of the green family car) parked in the DRIVEWAY. As she does this, her attention is drawn to a POST-IT NOTE, which reads:

Call gallery about extending?

Annie disregards this. She goes for a new bottle of paint, but as she reaches, an open paint bottle is KNOCKED over.

ANNIE
Shit.

It tipped over near Annie's extending hand, but it didn't *look* like Annie actually touched it.

Annie grabs paper towels and quickly mops up the mess. She pulls a few drenched items out of the widening paint puddle. Among them: JOAN'S PHONE NUMBER. She looks at it.

93 **INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY** 93

Peter walks absent-mindedly down the hall. THREE STONER BOYS (including Brendan) are walking toward him, huddled and giggling. They notice Peter.

BRENDAN
Yo, Pete.

PETER
Hey.

BRENDAN
(whispering)
You wanna join us for a walk?

On "*walk*," he mimes pinching a joint with his thumb and forefinger.

94 **EXT. HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD - DAY** 94

Peter sits under the BLEACHERS with the three stoners. They pass around a PIPE packed with weed. Brendan takes a hit.

BRENDAN
(looking at his phone)
Am I the only one who's Facebook friends with Becky?

Brendan passes the pipe to Peter.

STONER #2
You're *friends* with Becky*?*

Peter holds the pipe. Stares at it.

BRENDAN
Facebook friends, bitch!
(back to his point)
Oh my God, her statuses...

STONER #3
Oh my God, dude, I know.

BRENDAN
Every ten seconds!

Peter LIGHTS the bowl and takes a reluctant hit.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
"I'm going to the bathroom now." 5:45. "Just got back from the bathroom!" 5:46.

Peter COUGHS OUT a lungful of pot smoke. He immediately looks regretful.

STONER #2
What about Brian with *his* girlfriend?

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Ha! His "princess"?!

Stoner #2 nods his head, choking on laughter.

Peter's eyes are wide with a burgeoning panic. He does *not* look well.

STONER #2 (O.S.)
"Going to pick up my princess from the airport!" "Eating cous-cous with my princess!"

Peter looks like he's starting to have an ATTACK. The Stoners are oblivious.

STONER #3
Who's his girlfriend?

STONER #2
Some fuckin' stupid college chick.

STONER #3
What the fuck?! I want some stupid college princess chick.

Stoner #2 notices that Peter is freaking out.

STONER #2
Dude. Are you okay?

PETER
I feel like I can't breathe.

STONER #2
What?

PETER
I feel like I'm having a reaction.

BRENDAN
No, man, don't freak out. You just smoked too much.

PETER (CONT'D)
No, I think I need a doctor. My tongue is getting bigger.

Peter is crying now.

STONER #2
Should we take you to the nurse??

PETER
(scared)
I dunno.

BRENDAN
Look, dude: you're breathing. See? You're just really high.

Peter is trying to calm down.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
See? You're okay. You just got too high.
(rubbing his back)
You're okay, dude. You're breathing.

Stoner #2 and Stoner #3 exchange "holy shit" looks.

95 **EXT. STREET - DAY** 95

Annie walks down an urban street, looking for an address. She pinches the paper with Joan's number. On its other side is an ADDRESS in Annie's handwriting.

Annie finds the address. A large, red-brick APARTMENT BUILDING.

96 **INT. APARMENT BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY** 96

The elevator opens, depositing Annie onto the THIRD FLOOR. Annie proceeds down the well-lit hall, arriving at APARTMENT 316. She knocks.

While waiting, Annie looks down. She's standing on a HAND-MADE WELCOME MAT. The word "*JOANIE*" has been embroidered into it.

After a moment, the door is opened by JOAN.

JOAN
Annie! You came!

ANNIE
It's a little earlier than we said.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Ah, you're perfect. Come in.

97 **INT. JOAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 97

Annie follows Joan in. Joan closes the door behind them. The apartment is cheerfully decorated in bright, homey colors.

Joan rushes off to the KITCHEN, where a TEA KETTLE is whistling. Annie stays by the door.

ANNIE
Your welcome mat...

JOAN
Ha. It's kinda cute, right?

Joan pulls the kettle off the stove and pours two cups.

ANNIE
My mother used to embroider ones just like that.

JOAN
Oh really? How funny!

Joan sets the tea on the KITCHEN table.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Please. Sit.

98 **MINUTES LATER** 98

Joan and Annie sit at the table, nursing their tea. The conversation has become very heavy, and the spotlight is currently on a very fragile Annie. She speaks steadily, in fragments, as if to hold herself together. Her eyes are fixed on the floor.

ANNIE
He left her in the back seat. Went straight to bed.

Joan nods sympathetically. Her eyes locked attentively on Annie.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
And then *I* wake up. Went to my workshop. Needed some supplies. I go down to the car. Step inside. First the smell of something wrong. Then the - body. Slumped. Covered in black, blood, like *tar*...
(fighting tears)
And her head wasn't there, so I couldn't see her face. But they were her clothes. And her hands... her fingernails...

Joan is pale as she listens. Annie is trembling, locked on the memory.

Joan gently lays her hand over Annie's. Beat.

JOAN
When they dragged up my son and grandson, they needed me to identify the bodies. But they didn't warn me what bodies *look* like after they've been in the ocean. You can probably imagine - they swell up, get distended, turn grey. *I* didn't know that. My son's eyes were eaten out of his head by fish. And my grandson's face - like a balloon.

Annie is looking up at Joan now. They share in this. The grisly details are somehow (in their morbid way) comforting.

Breaking the spell, Annie pulls a PILL from her purse. She downs it with a gulp of TEA. She catches something on her tongue, and pulls a BLACK HERB from her mouth. She pays it no mind.

ANNIE
(suddenly self-conscious)
Do you have a bathroom?

99 **INT. JOAN'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 99

Annie washes her face at the sink. Then, searching for a hand towel, she opens a DRAWER. She finds a stack of hand towels, beside which she notices...

A COLLECTION OF HERBS AND SPICES. Beside this is a small THURIBLE (chafing dish) made of gold. Runic letters have been engraved into it.

Annie closes the drawer.

100 **INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER** 100

Annie returns from the bathroom.

ANNIE
Hi again.

JOAN
Welcome back!

Annie re-joins Joan at the table.

JOAN (CONT'D)
It's nice to actually have someone here for a change. Gets spooky being alone all the time.

ANNIE
I can imagine.

JOAN
Although I can sometimes *swear* I feel them in the room... Do you ever have that?

ANNIE
...Small moments maybe. Wishful thinking.

This hangs for a moment.

JOAN
How's your relationship with your son?

ANNIE
...Peter?

Joan brightens: *"That's his name?"* Annie thinks about Joan's question.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Oh God...

Her face DARKENS and she chuckles. She brushes it off, but then PAUSES. She decides to actually answer.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I sleepwalk.
(pause)
(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I haven't in a long time, but two years ago I woke up - and I don't remember this because I was asleep - but I woke up standing next to Peter and Charlie's bed (when they still shared a room), and they were *completely* covered in paint thinner... And so was I. From head to toe. *

WE CUT TO A **FLASHBACK,** TWO YEARS AGO. **PETER'S ROOM.** Charlie and Peter both have beds, they are both sleeping, and they are both DOUSED in paint thinner. ANNIE stands over them, also drenched. A gas canister rests at her feet and she holds a matchbox. Annie's dialogue continues over this scene, which plays in mute. The scene will play as she describes. *

ANNIE (V.O.)
And I was standing there, and I was holding a box of matches. And I woke myself up by *striking* one. Which also woke up *Peter*. And he started screaming. And I immediately put out the match, *immediately*, but my husband came in, and -

Back to the scene.

ANNIE
- it looked how it looked.

Joan is listening with no judgment. Annie, frustrated by the memory, takes a deep breath.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
And it was very hard for them to believe that it was *just* sleepwalking - which of *course* it was - but the timing was awful, Peter and I had already fallen into this stupid quarrelling phase - arguing forever about *nothing* - such *frivolous things* - but that's when the incident happened, *so*...!
(throws her hands up)
Over time, everyone *affected* casualness, "moving on." But they never forgot and Peter has *always* held it against me and there's nothing I can *say* and there's nothing I can *do* because it *happened*. While I was asleep.

JOAN
Did your daughter hold it against you?

ANNIE
Oh, she was off in the clouds somewhere. Probably didn't even notice.

Beat.

JOAN
(empathic)
It's impossible being a mother.

Annie looks at Joan. "*Yes it is.*"

101 **INT. BRENDAN'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY** 101

Brendan has driven a red-eyed Peter home. (Peter's bike is in the trunk.) Brendan idles up to the driveway and looks to Peter, who is still visibly recovering from his scare under the bleachers.

BRENDAN
Should I park?

PETER
That's okay, I can just get off here.

BRENDAN
You sure? I can hang out for a bit.

PETER
...My parents are weird about people in the house.

102 **INT. GRAHAM HOUSE - KITCHEN- MOMENTS LATER** 102

Steve is chopping carrots at the kitchen island. Peter is heard ENTERING in the foyer.

STEVE
Hey, that was fast. Did you bike all the way here?

PETER
(voice cracked)
My friend dropped me.

STEVE
Oh - you should've invited him in. *

But Peter's already going for the stairs. Steve tries to catch up with him.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Did you remember to sign up for that SAT prep course?

Peter has made it to the top of stairs. Hiding his wrought face:

PETER
I will tomorrow.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You need to, Peter! That's coming up!

103 **INT. PETER'S ROOM - DAY** 103

Peter lies in bed, on his side. He looks ready to burst back into tears.

Steve knocks on the door. Pokes his head in.

STEVE
Peter?

Peter turns to him, stifling tears.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

PETER
(deflecting)
Are *you*?

STEVE
(pause)
I'm making dinner tonight.

PETER
Okay.

STEVE
Anything special you'd like?

Peter shakes his head.

STEVE (CONT'D)
...Is there anything we can talk about, Peter?

PETER
Like what?

STEVE
Like anything. What's going on? What are you feeling?

PETER
What are *you* feeling?

STEVE
I'm just worried about you.

Peter stares at Steve, eyes wide. Unable to communicate.

STEVE (CONT'D)
(careful)
It doesn't have to be with *me*, either. Maybe you'd like to talk with somebody else...

PETER
About *what*?

STEVE
About everything! You're going through a lot, Peter.

PETER
So are you!

STEVE
Well - we *all* are. I think we could *all* use someone to talk to.

PETER
So why aren't *you*, then?

STEVE
I probably *will*. I probably *need* to.

A long, fraught pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You don't have to choose now. I'm just letting you know that it's *there*. You could even see one of the guys in my *building*. I know a *few* guys.

PETER
(warming up to it?)
...And *you* think I *need* to go?

STEVE
Well, that's for *you* to say. I can't tell you your experience.

Peter suddenly deflates. He chills over.

PETER
Maybe later.

STEVE
...Okay. Let me know.

PETER
Okay.

Steve nods for a long time. Trying to think of anything else.

STEVE
All right. Dinner in a bit.

Steve smiles sensitively. *Too* sensitive. He leaves.

104 **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT** 104

Steve chops carrots as water boils over the stove.

105 **INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT** 105

Annie is at work. Behind her, the door opens and Steve enters. He approaches to see...

Annie has added something to the miniature of the Graham house: a SLEEPING FIGURINE OF PETER has been placed in the replica of Peter's room, and a HEADLESS FIGURINE OF CHARLIE now rests in the back seat of the toy car. A figurine of Annie (on her knees, face in her hands) has been placed in the mini-driveway.

STEVE
Are you planning on letting him see that?

ANNIE
Who?

STEVE
(strong pause)
How do you think *Peter's* gonna feel about that?

ANNIE
It's not *about* him.

STEVE
Oh no?

ANNIE
...It's an objective view of that morning!

Steve just eyes her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Okay, so what *is* it, then?

STEVE
It's cruel, Annie. And unforgiving...

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Oh my *God*!

STEVE
And *use*less.

ANNIE
(incredulous)
What do you think I'm trying to *say* with this?! You think I'd ever want to hurt my own *son*?! Are you *crazy?!*

STEVE
Well, you're *doing* something to hurt him - right here!

ANNIE
Oh *Jesus* you're sanctimonious. I get it: you're a good father, you're a good husband - get off the stage.

Steve boils for a moment.

STEVE
(through clenched teeth)
Are you coming to dinner?

ANNIE
I'm *making* dinner!

STEVE
(snapping)
I made dinner! I'm GETTING you for dinner! Come down or stay here. I don't *give* a shit.

On "give", he leaves the room, SLAMMING the door behind him.

106 **INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT** 106

Annie, Steve and Peter sit at the dinner table. A fourth chair divides Annie and Peter. Annie is fuming from her last interaction with Steve. Beside her glass: an unswallowed pill.

PETER
This is really good, dad.

Annie balks to herself. Peter tenses.

STEVE
Thanks buddy.

Annie mouths the word "*buddy*" to herself, incredulous. Peter catches this.

PETER
(with an edge)
You okay, mom?

Annie turns to Peter.

ANNIE
What?

PETER
Is there something on your mind?

Annie can't believe this.

ANNIE
Is there something on *your* mind?

PETER
It just looks like you might want to say something.

STEVE
(stepping in)
Peter...

ANNIE
Like *what?* Why would I want to *say* something? So I can watch you can roll your eyes at me?

PETER
I have *never* rolled my eyes at you.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Oh sweetie - you don't *have* to. You get the point across.

PETER
(suddenly defiant)
Okay. So say what you wanna say, then.

STEVE
Peter--

ANNIE
(getting angry)
I don't <u>want</u> to say anything. I've <u>tried</u> saying things.

PETER
So try again. Release yourself.

ANNIE
Release *you*, you mean!

PETER
So fine, so release me! What do you wanna say? Fuckin' say it!

Annie explodes out of her seat.

ANNIE
Don't you swear at me - you little *shit!* You don't EVER raise your voice at me! I'm your *Mother* - you understand? I've given *everything* to you! All I ever *DO* is worry and slave and defend you, and all I get back is that fucking face on your face. So full of disdain and resentment and always so *annoyed*. Well, now your sister's dead! And I *know* you miss her and I *know* it was an "accident" and I *know* you're in pain - and I wish I could take it all away! I wish I could shield you from the knowledge that you did what you did - but your sister is *dead*. She's gone forever. And what a *waste*. If it could've maybe brought us together - *something!*
(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)
- if you could have just said "I'm sorry" or faced *up* to what happened: maybe *then* we could *do* something with this! But you can't take responsibility for anything, so now I can't accept. And I can't forgive. Because nobody admits what they've done!

She sits down. A heavy silence.

Peter is looking away, fighting tears. But then, after a long silence...

PETER
And what about *you,* mom? What about what *you've* done?
(long pause, then)
I didn't want to take her...and *she* didn't want to go... So why was she there?

Annie looks at him. Incredulous. She is boiling with rage, but this has also hit her somewhere *deep*. She's desperately avoided facing this question since the accident.

STEVE
Okay, we're stopping this.

He looks at Annie, who looks like she's about to lose her mind.

STEVE (CONT'D)
We're stopping this right now.

Annie glowers at him. Adversarial. She finally relents, and slowly RISES.

ANNIE
Fine.

As she walks out:

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I'm *sorry*, okay? I'm always fucking sorry.

And she's gone.

Steve turns to Peter: he's doing everything in his power to keep from exploding into tears. Steve looks powerless to help.

107 **INT. ANNIE AND STEVE'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER** 107

Steve enters the bedroom, furious. Annie is sitting on the bed, a hardness in her eyes.

STEVE
What the hell are you doing?

ANNIE
What am *I* doing?!

STEVE
Try to stop and see what's happening, Annie. For *one* second. Try to see where this could go. It's *not* the right choice.

ANNIE
These are *your* choices, too! You *choose* to not see how he is. How *cold* he is with me. How dimissive.

STEVE
So we'll deal with that! We can go to family therapy, whatever - but *don't* make it about *Charlie*!

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Oh, family therapy! Right!

ANNIE (CONT'D)
So what, then? We just chalk it up to an act of God?

STEVE
(strongly)
Yes.

ANNIE
He just left her in the car! Went straight to bed! Not a *word!*

STEVE (CONT'D)
You can't even *imagine* he was in shock?

ANNIE
He left *us* to be in shock, too!

STEVE
There was no way around that. You need to stop this. If he *had* warned us, we still would have run out there to find her in the same way.

ANNIE
(ignoring him)
And it wasn't a fucking BBQ either. He lied to us, through his *teeth*. He took her to some sleazy high school house party!

STEVE
You *knew* it wasn't a BBQ!

ANNIE (CONT'D)
He just left her head in the road and kept driving. He went to *sleep*!

STEVE
Goddamn it -- He was in <u>shock</u>. He's *still* in shock.

ANNIE
(acidly)
He looks pretty gathered to me.

STEVE
Gathered?!

ANNIE (CONT'D)
You're holding *your*self together awfully well, too!

STEVE
Excuse me? And what the hell does *that* mean?
(no answer)
Someone has to keep things from unraveling *completely*, Annie.

ANNIE
(exploding)
It *has* unraveled completely!

Silence. Steve is frozen.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...Don't worry. I blame myself, too.

STEVE
That's worthless.

ANNIE
I'm the one who made her go to the party.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Oh, stop it!

ANNIE
No! Don't you *dare*! He's right! I made Peter take her! She *begged* me not to go!

STEVE
I was *happy* she was going! Be around other kids instead of that fuckin' treehouse for a change! *I* would have pushed her if you hadn't!

ANNIE (CONT'D)
But you *didn't* push her. I did.

STEVE
...We have no control over anything, Annie. The ceiling could collapse on us right now and who would we blame?

Brief pause.

ANNIE
You don't understand anything, do you?

108 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 108

Peter boils in bed, staring out the window.

A gentle knock at the door. It cracks open and Steve sticks his head in.

STEVE
Goodnight, Petey.

Peter looks at Steve.

PETER
Do *you* blame me, too?

STEVE
Goddamn it -

Steve opens the door all the way.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Of course not. No one blames you.

Steve approaches Peter.

STEVE (CONT'D)
I don't for one *second* imagine that you're not going through the *exact* same thing we are.

PETER
Mom doesn't think so.

STEVE
Stop it with mom. She's blaming everyone. It's part of grieving. She blames her*self*.

Peter has started to cry.

PETER
She wasn't driving the car.

STEVE
She *could* have. Anyone could have.

PETER
(through helpless tears)
I didn't even care about her...!
That's how it happened...!

Steve is momentarily overwhelmed.

STEVE
(weakly)
You love your sister.

PETER
(boiling with self-hatred)
I should be dead. At least she could draw. She *made* things. I don't do *any*thing.

STEVE
Yes you do. Don't ever say that.

PETER
(burying his face in his pillow)
I'm *nothing*. I do *nothing*. I have no purpose, I'm *nothing*!

Steve, looking helpless, rests his hand on Peter's head. Peter WEEPS. Steve is also crying now.

PETER (CONT'D)
(into his pillow)
I'm sorry!

STEVE
Shhh! *I'm* sorry.

109 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 109

Annie lies on the bed, her back to us. We hear Peter's weeping, muffled through the walls. We then hear:

ANNIE
(barely audible)
I'm sorry.

Annie's back begins to rise and fall in a fit of sobs.

FADE TO **BLACK**

110 **INT. WORKSHOP - DAY - DAYS LATER** 110

CLOSE-UP of Annie's face. Lethargic. She's lost a few pounds since we last saw her, and is wearing an old T-shirt and pajama bottoms.

She stares at her unfinished miniatures. Her eyes then drift to a Post-It note above her desk. It reads "*KEEP WORKING!*"

111 **INT. ART SUPPLY STORE - DAY** 111

Annie pushes a cart down an aisle of miniature building materials. She looks farther down the aisle, and suddenly STOPS, having noticed...

JOAN is pushing a cart toward Annie. She hasn't yet noticed Annie. She wears an ECSTATIC SMILE as she giddily scans the chalk section.

Confused by Joan's demeanor (and her presence), Annie warily begins to push her cart toward her.

ANNIE
Joan?

Joan looks up to see Annie.

JOAN
Oh my -- Annie?!

ANNIE
Hi...!

Joan circles the carts to give Annie a big, warm, very sustained HUG.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

JOAN
(beaming)
Oh Annie. Yes. I'm really good. I'm really really...

Annie nods, forcing a smile. She looks concerned for Joan's sanity.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Something happened, Annie. I feel completely - turned around.

ANNIE
What happened?

JOAN
I don't know if I should even say!

ANNIE
What do you mean?

JOAN
(laughing)
You're gonna think I'm crazy!

ANNIE
Not at all...!

JOAN
(confidentially)
I...oh God. I met...a spiritual medium.

ANNIE
Oh. Wow.

JOAN
(explaining)
They were performing an open seance -- I know: I know what you're thinking - but they asked me to attend. They were bringing skeptics in, and scientists, so they wouldn't be accused of fraud. But I went, *fully* skeptical, and what I experienced there was truly...

Joan tries to think of a suitably ecstatic adjective.

ANNIE
An "open seance"?

JOAN
(nodding)
They brought back the spirit of a man from the 19th century! And *not* like as a smoke and mirrors thing. The man next to me was a completely cynical *neurologist*, and he looked permanently *changed* by the end of it.

ANNIE
(placating)
Wow.

JOAN
And I do know what you're thinking, Annie - of *course* - but I approached the medium and I asked her about my son and my grandson, and she came to my apartment and she ended up performing a, uh - well - she...*conjured* my grandson!

Annie, now frightened, forces a patronizing smile.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I know what you're smiling at. I wouldn't believe it myself. I *didn't!* But I *heard* his voice, I *felt* him in the room. It's *real*.

Annie's smile is plastered appeasingly to her face.

JOAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing right now?

ANNIE
I'm just - here, shopping.

JOAN
You wanna come over?

Annie doesn't know what to say.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I really think you should. Please. It would be everything if you came.

112 **INT. JOAN'S APARTMENT - DAY** 112

The front door opens and Joan enters, followed uneasily by Annie. Joan smiles widely.

JOAN
Hello!

This “hello” was seemingly directed at the room in general.

Joan hustles to the KITCHEN. She takes SWEETGRASS and smears it across the surface of the kitchen table. Also on the table is an UPTURNED DRINKING GLASS.

JOAN (CONT’D)
(to Annie)
This is part of it.

Annie is hovering outside the kitchen.

JOAN (CONT’D)
Come in. Come in.

Annie hesitantly enters. The WINDOW has been blacked out with duvateen.

JOAN (CONT’D)
Okay: a few things. *First:* you shouldn’t do this without a medium unless you are a medium. That’s what she told me.

ANNIE
Okay.

JOAN
But I told you: I’d been experiencing these...sensations a long time *before* the medium. I just didn’t know how to explain them! So I tried this last night. This was *after* the medium was here.

ANNIE
What’s “this”?

JOAN
Sit down.

Annie is skeptical.

JOAN (CONT’D)
Trust me.

Annie sits down.

JOAN (CONT’D)
I’m turning off the light.

JOAN TURNS OFF THE LIGHTS.

JOAN (CONT’D)
You okay?

ANNIE
...Yes.

Joan lights a BLACK CANDLE.

ANNIE (CONT’D)
(forcing levity)
Nice mood setter.

JOAN
Okay. Put your hand on the glass, but don't add pressure.

Annie lays her hand on the overturned glass. Joan does the same.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I won't add pressure, either.

ANNIE
(more to herself)
What am I doing?

After a moment of silence, Joan speaks to the room.

JOAN
Louie?

Beat.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Louie, are you here? It's grandma.

A COLD DRAFT crosses the room. Annie gets a tingle. But the window is shut, as is the door.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Louie, if you're here with us, please just try to slide the glass.
(pause)
Louie, if you're here--

The glass SLIDES, barely. Annie jumps, retracting her hand.

JOAN (CONT'D)
(tears of happiness)
Hi Louie!

ANNIE
(eyes wide)
How did you do that?

Annie looks under the table. There's nothing there.

JOAN
(continuing)
Louie, I'm gonna ask you some questions - okay, sweetie? If the answer's yes, just slide the glass to the right. If it's no, slide it *this* way -
(demonstrating)
- to the left. Do you understand?

The glass SLIDES again, slightly to the right.

ANNIE
Oh my God.

JOAN
Louie, are you okay?

The glass slides right again.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Are you in pain?

The glass slides to the left.

Annie is gripping her chair. She stares unblinkingly at the glass.

Suddenly ANNIE'S HAIR IS BRUSHED TO THE SIDE, as if by an invisible hand. She JUMPS. Joan calmly takes Annie's hand.

JOAN (CONT'D)
It's okay.

ANNIE
(frightened)
What is?

Joan pulls up a small CHALKBOARD from below the table. It's unmarked. A tiny piece of chalk rests on the surface.

JOAN
Louie, I brought your chalkboard. Remember your chalkboard?

The glass budges slightly to the right.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Can you write something?

A long moment of inactivity, and THEN...

The piece of chalk MOVES (as if by invisible fingers) to scrawl the words "*I LOV YU GRANMA*" in a young child's handwriting!

JOAN (CONT'D)
Oh Louie, I love *you*, sweetheart!

Joan is crying tears of joy.

ANNIE
I'm sorry, can we stop?

JOAN
What?

ANNIE
I'm sorry. Please.

JOAN
(to the room)
Louie, we're gonna stop for a second, but I'm coming right back!

Joan jumps up and turns on the lights. Annie looks rattled.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

ANNIE
(shaken)
I'm sorry, I'm really...

JOAN
I understand. That's how *I* reacted at first.

ANNIE
I think I need to go.

JOAN
That's okay.

ANNIE
Thank you. I'm sorry.

Annie rises. Joan blows out the candle, grabs it, and shuffles to the kitchen to fetch a sheet of paper. It features a Sanskrit prayer (transcribed in carefully handwritten English).

Joan returns to Annie with the paper and the black candle.

JOAN
Here:
(handing them to her)
If you wanna try this yourself, light the candle and then -
(seriously)
- read this out loud - every syllable - very carefully.

ANNIE
(overwhelmed)
Why? What is it?

JOAN
I don't know what language it is. The medium had *me* read it, too. It's to make it start.

Annie uneasily accepts the articles and then turns to leave. As she walks toward the door:

JOAN (CONT'D)
You didn't kill her, Annie.

Annie turns sharply to Joan.

ANNIE
What?

JOAN
She isn't gone.

ANNIE
I *didn't* kill her!

Joan smiles warmly. *"I know."*

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Okay. Thank you.

Annie leaves, trembling.

113 **INT. CAR (MOVING) - EVENING** 113

A discombobulated Annie drives back home. Her eyes are buzzing and her movements are jerky and ill-possessed.

She slows to a stop at a red light.

As she sits waiting for the light to change, Annie hears a CLICKING SOUND in the back seat. She goes white. She slowly turns to look at the back seat. The clicking has ceased.

Annie's eyes are crazed.

114 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - NIGHT** 114

A wide shot of the house. Bathed in the pale moonlight, it almost looks like one of Annie's miniatures. All the lights are off, save for ONE window.

115 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 115

Peter is asleep in his bed.

116 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 116

Steve is fast asleep. Annie's side of the bed is EMPTY.

The door to the MASTER BATHROOM is closed, but a band of light is visible beneath the door. Behind the door, Annie is heard WHISPERING intensely - presumably on the phone.

ANNIE (O.S.)
Can it be anything?... Like her clothes?

117 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 117

CLOSE UP on Peter's profile. He's asleep.

Off-screen, the door is heard CREAKING OPEN. After a moment, Annie leans into frame, hovering over Peter.

ANNIE
(whispering)
Peter.

Peter doesn't stir.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Sweetheart. Peter. Wake up.

Peter inhales sharply. He wakes with a start.

PETER
What?

ANNIE
It's okay, honey, it's me.

Peter is still getting oriented. Annie looks strangely hopeful.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I'm so, so sorry for everything. Please, *please* forgive me. I can't *stand* the things I said.

PETER
It's okay.

Annie bends over to envelop him in a hug.

ANNIE
Can you get up, sweetheart? We're gonna try something.

PETER
I was just having a nightmare.

ANNIE
That's okay, baby. We can do something.

PETER
Do what?

ANNIE
I've figured it out.

118 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 118

Annie stands over Steve, who's asleep in bed.

ANNIE
Steve. Baby.

She nudges him gently.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Steve. Wake up.

Steve stirs awake.

STEVE
What's going on?

ANNIE
Come downstairs with us. We're gonna do something together.

Steve looks to the door. Peter is standing nervously in the unlit hallway.

119 **INT. STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER** 119

Annie walks down the hall. Steve and Peter follow warily behind.

PETER
(whispering)
Dad?

STEVE
(whispering)
It's okay.

Annie leads them to the unlit DINING ROOM...

120 **INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS** 120

The oval dining table has been set with an upturned DRINKING GLASS. Beside it is CHARLIE'S DRAWING PAD and one of Charlie's hoodies. The BLACK CANDLE that Joan gave Annie is dimly illuminating the table. The WINDOW is open, and it is COLD. Peter hugs himself; Steve rubs his arms.

STEVE
It's freezing.

Steve goes for the window.

ANNIE
No: Don't change anything. I don't want to mess it up.

Annie sits down. There is a chair on either side of her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Everyone sit.

They don't.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
My friend Joan taught me how to do this.

STEVE
What friend Joan? And what's "*this*"?

ANNIE
Please sit. We need our palms on the table and our fingers to touch.

STEVE
What are we doing, Annie?

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Please. You'll see.

Steve just looks at her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Please just trust me.

Steve doesn't budge.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Fine!

Annie stands up, DRAGS the table halfway towards Steve and Peter, and GRABS their hands.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
We can do it *here,* then.

She SQUEEZES their hands.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I need you both to concentrate.

PETER
On what?

ANNIE
(pause)
Think about Charlie if you can.

STEVE
(stern)
Annie!

Steve pulls his hand away from Annie.

ANNIE
(urgent)
Sweetheart, please. *Please*. I tried this twenty minutes ago and it *worked*. I wouldn't be bringing you down here if it didn't.

STEVE
What worked?

ANNIE
(pause)
I wanna just show you.

STEVE
Show us what?!

ANNIE
(frustrated)
Fuck! I'm a - medium!

Before Steve can protest:

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I was seeing apparitions earlier. I just shook them off, but I *shouldn't* have.
(gripping his hand)
Please: I know how it sounds. There's no way to talk about it, I need to just *show* you. Okay? *Please.* You'll see. I'm completely lucid.

Steve just stares at her. She looks pleadingly at him.

STEVE
(to Peter)
You can go to bed, Peter. I'll stay.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
What? *No.* What are you doing?
(to Peter)
Peter: please. This needs *all* of our energies. We need to do this as a *family*. *Together.*

PETER
(to Steve)
It's okay, Dad. I'll stay.

ANNIE
(to Steve)
Please Steve. I need you to be open. Both of you. I promise.

She holds out her hand, pleading for Steve's. He reluctantly obliges. Again, she SQUEEZES both of their hands.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Okay, good. So I already read *that* earlier...

Annie nods to the prayer sheet that Joan gave her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I don't think I need to read it again.

Steve squints as he looks it over.

STEVE
What *language* is that?

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(back to business)
Okay: Try to concentrate.

Annie now addresses the room.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Charlie?... Charlie, are you here?

Steve looks ready to put an immediate stop to this, but he sees Annie's total determination. He holds off.

In the other room, a door is heard CREAKING. Peter looks in that direction.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Charlie? It's mommy. And daddy. And Peter.

Silence. Peter and Steve are very uneasy.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Charlie, if you're in this room with us -- I'm going to have us all touch this glass.

Annie has PULLED Steve and Peter to the table. She rests her palm on top of the glass. She takes Steve's hand and Peter's hand. She lays them on top of hers.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(to Steve and Peter)
Don't add pressure.
(to the room)
Now if you're here, Charlie, I just want you to move the glass for us. Even if it's just a tiny little bit.

STEVE
(needing to interject)
Annie.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(ignoring Steve)
Even if it's just the tiniest little movement, Charlie!

A long stretch of nothing. Annie's determination has not waned. Peter suddenly TENSES UP.

PETER
(to Steve)
What the hell?

STEVE
What's wrong?

Max BARKS in the other room.

PETER
You don't feel that?

STEVE
What??

PETER
Like a - flexing. In the air.

THE DRINKING GLASS SUDDENLY MOVES.

Peter and Steve retract their hands.

STEVE
What the hell?

ANNIE
Wow! Yes! Thank you, Charlie! That was so good!

The color has drained from Peter's face.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Now Charlie, what I'd like for you to do is I'd like for you to...

Annie opens the DRAWING PAD. She flips it to a blank page, and lays a small piece of PENCIL LEAD on top.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...show them what you were doing earlier.

Pause.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(to the room)
Can you show them what you just did for me?

PETER
Mom.

Intensely focused, Annie points to the pad.

ANNIE
Look: She's gonna do it.

Peter looks to the pad, terrified. Steve SEES Peter's fear. Steve SHUTS the drawing pad.

STEVE
That's enough.

ANNIE
What? No!

Annie grabs the pad and flips to a PAGE near the back. It is a simple DRAWING - in Charlie's style - of a CAR. She holds it up for Steve.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
When I did this earlier, *this* materialized on the page! I saw this draw *itself!* I *saw* it!

PETER
Mom, what is this?

ANNIE
IT'S CHARLIE!

STEVE
ANNIE--

Cutting Steve off, Annie continues addressing the room.

ANNIE
Did you finish, Charlie?! Did you want to draw more?

She returns the drawing pad (now open to the car drawing) to the center of the table.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
You can keep going if you weren't finished!

Annie GRABS Steve's and Peter's hand, and presses them against the table again. She pushes her hands on top of theirs.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
We need to keep our fingers touching.
We need to give good energy.

Steve PULLS his hand away. Peter does, too. Annie SEIZES Peter's wrist.

STEVE
This is SCARING him, Annie!

ANNIE (CONT'D)
No it's NOT!

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(to Peter)
Don't be scared, Peter. This is your sister.
(to the room)
Charlie? Are you finished with the drawing?

Silence. Suddenly an intense GUST OF AIR sweeps the room (from the open window?) and the DOOR SLAMS SHUT. Max is now BARKING like crazy in the other room.

PETER
(very scared)
Mom?!

ANNIE
(to the room)
Charlie? What's wrong?

The air seems to be sucked out of the room for a moment. The family is suspended in frightened anticipation. And then --

THE CANDLE'S FLAME BELCHES, as if fueled (for an instant) by propane. Everyone GASPS! The flame is immediately extinguished.

Silence now - save for Max, still barking in the other room. We are left for a moment in darkness, and then...

The candle's wick quietly RE-IGNITES on its own. The flame now burns normally. Peter and Steve stare open-mouthed at this.

Steve looks under the table. Nothing is there. He warily lifts the candle to see if there's anything attached to the bottom. There is not. Before Steve can react --

A FAINT GROANING SOUND is ushered. Peter and Steve, frozen for a moment, look nervously to the source. It's coming from...

ANNIE. Her head is down. She's moaning, as if trying to vomit. She's in some sort of TRANCE. Finally, she lets out a LONG, PAINED GROAN. Guttural and almost inhuman-sounding. It drags out longer than wanted. And then...

Annie stops. Her eyes are WIDE. Like a child's. She then says:

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Hello?

But her voice sounds different. It will now remind us - in inflection, in quality - of CHARLIE'S VOICE.

PETER
(horrified)
Mom?

ANNIE
(like Charlie)
Mom?

Annie looks around, as if looking for “Mom.” She looks very scared now (but she’s *still* squeezing Peter’s wrist).

ANNIE (CONT’D)
(like Charlie)
Mom?!

PETER
(to Steve)
I don’t like this.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(like Charlie)
What’s happening?! *

PETER
(to Steve)
Dad! I don’t like this!

STEVE
(also afraid)
Annie...

ANNIE
(like Charlie)
What’s going on?!

Annie is still looking around, as if she can’t see. As if she’s BLIND.

PETER
(crying)
Mommy?!

Annie is crying now, too.

ANNIE
(like Charlie)
Mom??

Mortified, Peter tugs on Steve’s arm.

PETER
Please, dad!

STEVE
(helpless)
ANNIE! STOP IT!

ANNIE
(like Charlie)
What’s happening?! Why is everyone scared?!

Terrified silence.

ANNIE (CONT’D)
(like Charlie)
WHY ARE YOU SCARING ME?!

More terrified silence.

ANNIE (CONT’D)
(like Charlie)
Dad! Peter! I’m scared! Where’s mom?!

PETER
(can’t take anymore)
DAD!

Steve runs to TURN ON THE LIGHTS. Annie is still possessed, looking blindly about the room.

Steve runs out of the room to go to the KITCHEN.

We stay with Annie and Peter.

ANNIE
(like Charlie)
Peter, what's going on?
Where's mom?

PETER (CONT'D)
Stop it!

ANNIE
(like a scared animal)
Why are you trying to scare me?!

Steve re-enters the room, holding a GLASS OF WATER. He TOSSES it in Annie's face. She GASPS - roused from her trance.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
What the hell! What are you *doing*?!

Annie is frozen. She takes in her drenched body. Max has stopped barking in the other room.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
What just happened?

Peter and Steve are traumatized.

121 **EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT** 121

Steve has pulled Annie outside. He's very aggressive. Annie has wiped the water off her face with a towel. In the b.g., Peter watches from a window.

STEVE
What the fuck did you just do?

ANNIE
I didn't do anything!

STEVE
I swear to God, Annie--

ANNIE
You were there. You *saw* what happened. That wasn't me.

A fraught beat. Steve stares daggers.

STEVE
What *was* that, Annie?

ANNIE
We communicated with Charlie.

STEVE
(meaning it)
Stop it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
You *saw* that we did!

STEVE
Did you happen to see your *son* in there? Did you even *notice* that he's absolutely terrified?!

ANNIE
Are you sure *you're* not terrified?

STEVE
I *am* terrified! I'm fuckin' scared of *you*.
(definitively)
Tomorrow. We're going to see Dr. Stetson.

Annie's eyes go cold with recognition.

ANNIE
I don't *wanna* see Dr. Stetson.

STEVE
Well, *I* don't wanna be conducting seances in my fucking dining room!

Steve storms inside. Annie follows him. She boils.

ANNIE
Goddamn it! Denial can be a crazy thing, *too*, Steve! To be so *rigid!*

But Steve keeps walking off.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
HEY!

Steve pauses, also boiling.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
What happened when I blacked out? Did something happen?

Steve just looks at her.

122 **INT. ANNIE AND STEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 122

The moonlight is an icy blue.

Annie and Steve are in bed. Steve is asleep with his back to Annie. Annie is too anxious to sleep.

She turns her face into her pillow, only to notice TWO ANTS crawling on the pillowcase. She looks down to see THREE MORE ANTS on the bed. She then pulls ONE ANT off of her shoulder.

Annie sits up. She looks down to see a TRAIL OF ANTS on the floor, leading into the hallway. The trail is coming from the WINDOW.

Annie gets out of bed and checks the window. It's locked. But the trail seems to be COMING IN through a small gap in the corner of the sill.

Annie follows the trail of black ants out of the room and into the hallway...

123 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 123

The trail of ants is leading clearly to PETER'S BEDROOM. His door is open. (There is the faint sound of Max's barking, as if heard from a great distance.)

124 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 124

Annie enters Peter's bedroom. The queue of ants continues toward Peter's bed. They crawl up the bed post and onto the mattress, continuing up Peter's leg and across his body - all the way up to his neck.

Annie draws closer. As she approaches, it becomes horribly apparent...

THE BLACK ANTS HAVE COMPLETELY ENVELOPED PETER'S HEAD AND FACE.

PETER (V.O.)
Mom! What are you doing?!

CLOSE-UP OF ANNIE'S FACE. Her expression goes from horrified to confused. She looks up, unnerved, and takes in her surroundings. We cut WIDE to reveal:

Annie is standing in Peter's dark room, but Peter is now sitting up in bed. There are no ants. It was all a dream?

ANNIE
What's going on?

PETER
You were sleepwalking.

There is no audible room tone and the dialogue is strangely CRISP, as though being spoken in a dreamy vacuum. The only other sound is Max's distant BARKING.

Annie looks extremely confused and afraid.

ANNIE
I'm sorry...

Annie looks around.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Is Charlie here?

PETER
Why are you afraid of me?

ANNIE
(looking at him now)
What?

Annie's expression pleads "*How could you ask me that?*" But Peter just stares back at her. Annie's attitude suddenly TURNS - from defensive to confessional. She admits:

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I never wanted to be your mother--

Annie covers her mouth, as if in shock at her own words. She looks to Peter like a child who just accidentally broke something.

PETER
(emotional)
Why not?

ANNIE
I just...was scared. I didn't *feel* like a mother. But your dad and my mom...pressured me.

PETER
So why did you *have* me?

ANNIE
It's not my fault...! I tried to stop it.

PETER
What do you mean?

ANNIE
(barely able to say it)
...I tried to have a miscarriage.

Peter starts tearing up.

PETER
How?

ANNIE
(also tearing up)
However I could...! I took too much vitamin C. I did everything they told me *not* to do. But it didn't work. I'm so *happy* it didn't work!

Max's muffled barking has become faintly more distinct. Peter is crying now.

PETER
You tried to kill me?

Annie, also crying, shakes her head.

ANNIE
I love you.

We cut back to Peter, but his hair and face are now inexplicably DRENCHED in liquid (presumably paint thinner). *

PETER
Why did you try to kill me?

We cut back to Annie, revealing that *she's* now drenched in paint thinner, too. *

ANNIE
I didn't. I was dreaming.

We cut to a WIDE TABLEAU of the room. Their silhouettes are in the center, in profile. Behind them a flame IGNITES at a point on the floor. A trail of FIRE quickly blooms in both directions. It spreads quickly (into the shape of a burning triangle) and it concludes its journey at Annie and Peter. Their bodies are instantly SWALLOWED UP by the apocalyptic flames.

MAX'S OFF-SCREEN BARKING HAS NOW BECOME VERY LOUD, VERY PRESENT. It reaches an almost unbearable pitch before we CUT TO:

125 **INT. ANNIE & STEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 125

ANNIE WAKES UP WITH A START. It was all a dream.

Max is barking wildly in the hallway.

A FLY lands on Annie's face. Brushing it away, she notices that Steve's side of the bed is EMPTY. His pillow is also missing.

Annie climbs out of bed.

126 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 126

Max is barking aggressively. His eyes are trained fiercely on a spot on the ceiling, near the ATTIC DOOR.

Annie, stepping into the hallway, approaches Max. She hushes him in a soothing voice, but Max TURNS, baring his TEETH. He SNARLS at her. It's meant as a threat and she knows it. Annie backs off. Max doesn't.

Steve scales the stairs.

STEVE
What's going on?!

Max BARKS at Annie. Ready to attack.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Whoa, hey!

Steve grabs Max by the collar, restraining him.

STEVE (CONT'D)
What happened?

Annie can't speak. Steve tugs Max away and pulls him down the stairs. Max continues snarling and barking in Annie's direction.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Calm down! Jesus!

127 **INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER** 127

Steve drags Max out through the kitchen door. He deposits Max outside, slamming the door in the dog's face. He LOCKS the door.

Steve goes to the LIVING ROOM, where he sees Annie standing at the base of the stairs.

Steve regards her with cold eyes and then continues to the COUCH, where his pillow and a blanket have been set up. He climbs into "bed," very aware that Annie is staring him down.

ANNIE
You don't have to punish me.

STEVE
I'm not punishing anyone, Annie.
Tonight *I'm* sleeping alone.

ANNIE
I did it for us. We weren't dealing
with it.

Steve doesn't have the energy. He closes his eyes.

STEVE
Take a Lorazepam. I'm going to sleep.

Max's barking continues in the distance.

128 **INT. WORKSHOP - SAME TIME** 128

A severe work light (beaming down) illuminates the miniature replica of the GRAHAM HOUSE. We push ominously in on the forbidding dollhouse.

Max's off-screen BARKING persists, and continues through the next scene...

129 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 129

The lights are on. Peter, dressed in his pajamas, sits traumatized on the edge of his bed.

The composition of this shot (wide, high-angle) is MATCHED eerily on the CUT TO:

130 **INT. CLASSROOM - DAY** 130

Peter sits tensely in the back corner of his classroom.

The teacher stands at the blackboard, leading the class through an algebra lesson.

Peter's mind is a storm. He's brought fiercely into the present, however, when a strange, barely perceptible glint of LIGHT (we've seen this before) FLASHES across the room. The light ends at the WINDOW next to Peter.

Peter looks around. Nobody else noticed it. Peter blinks a few times, concerned that he might be seeing things. He turns back to the window to see...

Peter's REFLECTION is staring pointedly back at him.

The color drains from Peter's face. He looks weakly back at his own reflection, whose eyes HARDEN against him. His reflection then says, in a barely audible, accusatory whisper:

PETER
(as reflection)
You did it.

Petrified, Peter shakes his head - eyes locked on the reflection.

Peter's reflection does not soften. The eyes only get harsher. It now REPEATS, mouthing the word "*You.*"

Overwhelmed, Peter abruptly STANDS UP, distracting the teacher.

TEACHER
Yes, Peter?

PETER
(confused)
I - have to go to the bathroom.

Aware of Peter's recent trauma, the Teacher is careful to be extra-sensitive.

TEACHER
That's fine. Just take the pass.

Peter leaves, tears in his eyes.

131 **INT. STEVE'S OFFICE - DAY** 131

Steve sits stiffly at the computer in his office. He has typed into his search engine *"Paranormal evidence, voice channeling,"* but he pauses and then DELETES this. He now writes "*Symptomatology and management of grief hallucinations.*" He presses SEND.

Steve looks over the results, and then clicks on a separate tab. It's a half-composed EMAIL to a fellow psychiatrist. The email reads...

Hi Bob,

I hesitate to write, but I'm worried that Annie might be on the verge of (or in the MIDDLE of)

He's stuck on how to continue.

Steve's cell phone rings. It's an unknown number. He hesitates before answering it.

STEVE
Hello?

There's a strange wave of STATIC and then...

PETER (V.O.)
(almost whispering)
Dad?

STEVE
Peter?

We can hear that Peter is crying, near hysteria.

PETER (V.O.)
Something's at the school.

STEVE
What is?

PETER (V.O.)
It followed me here!

132 **INT. GRAHAM KITCHEN - DAY** 132

Three FLIES have gathered on the kitchen island. Two other flies buzz about in the b.g. One fly burrows along the CARVED SYMBOL behind the fridge (which Peter discovered earlier in the film).

The kitchen phone RINGS.

133 **INT. ANNIE'S WORKSHOP - SAME TIME** 133

The phone continues to ring in here.

Annie, still wearing her nightgown, nervously applies finishing touches to a FUNERAL HOME miniature. She turns to ANSWER the cordless phone to her side.

ANNIE
Hello?

Steve is on the other end. We can hear that he is DRIVING.

STEVE (V.O.)
(furious)
Can you guess who just called me from school in complete hysterics?

Annie goes pale.

ANNIE
(gravely)
Charlie?

STEVE (V.O.)
...What?

ANNIE
I -- nothing. What happened?

STEVE (V.O.)
Peter just called me, Annie. *Terrified*. Crying in the *halls*. He's convinced he's being threatened by some *vengeful spirit*.

ANNIE
Why does he think he's being *threatened*?

STEVE (V.O.)
(no patience)
Listen to me, Annie: I have a son to protect.

ANNIE
What does *that* mean?

STEVE (V.O.)
It means *that's* what I'm worried about right now. *That's* how I'm proceeding.

ANNIE
Don't talk to me like this. He's *my* son, too.

CLICK. He's hung up.

Infuriated, Annie calls Steve back. He answers.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Don't hang up on me again. I'm not sleepwalking anymore, you understand?

She hangs up.

Annie returns to the miniature funeral home. She carefully (but tensely) presses a freshly GLUED piece of balsa wood against the beautifully rendered wall. She holds it in place.

The phone RINGS. Annie doesn't care. It rings until the ANSWERING MACHINE gets it. After the outgoing message, the machine BEEPS and a WOMAN leaves a message.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Hi Annie! It's Margaret at the Asher Gallery. I'm just calling to see how things are with you and your family - I hope everything's okay - and also, just wondering, uh, how the progress is going. Not that *you* need reminding - haha - but we *are* a little less than nine weeks away, so it would just be nice to get the vaguest sense of where we are. So yeah, call me back when you can, and again, I really hope everything's okay and getting better and our thoughts are all very much with your family, so - Okay. Thanks so much. Thank you.

Click. BEEP.

Annie has grown extremely TENSE over the course of that message. Still applying pressure to the glued-on piece, she pushes a little too hard, and her thumb BREAKS THROUGH the miniature's wall.

Annie FREEZES for a moment, shocked. Then, overcome by sheer frustration, she raises her FIST and SMASHES IT DOWN into the funeral home's floor, SNAPPING it.

Taken by a surge of destructive rage, she SWEEPS the miniature off the table and rises to STOMP her foot through its roof. DESTROYING IT.

Without missing a beat, she grabs a HAMMER and proceeds to SMASH APART the rest of her miniatures. It's a woeful, devastating fit. By the time Annie gets a grip on herself, it's too late. All of the pieces have been destroyed. All except for one... The MINIATURE OF THE GRAHAM HOUSE.

Annie drops the hammer.

134 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - DAY** 134

Steve parks his car in the driveway. He and Peter emerge.

135 **INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER** 135

Steve and Peter enter through the front door. A bad SMELL immediately hits them.

STEVE
Whoa. Jesus.

They proceed up the stairs. Steve swipes away a fly.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Did something die in here?

136 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 136

Peter goes to his room, closing the door behind him.

Steve walks up to the WORKSHOP's door. He opens it without knocking.

STEVE
(entering)
Annie, what is that smell--

But he FREEZES when he sees the state of the demolished room. Annie sits in her chair, completely surrounded by smashed and splintered wood.

STEVE (CONT'D)
(stunned)
...What *happened?*

He looks at Annie and almost immediately understands. *She* did this. His heart breaks. *

ANNIE
I didn't wanna look at it anymore.

Steve stares at her for a very long time. He then grabs the PHONE and storms into the hallway, dialing a number.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(rising)
Hey! Who are you calling?!

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Through the upstairs hallway window, ANOTHER CAR pulls up to park behind Steve's car. A pleasant, well scrubbed man (50s) emerges to walk toward the house. This is DR. STETSON.

There is a KNOCK at the door. It is heard OPENING.

DR. STETSON (O.S.)
Hi Steve.

STEVE (O.S.)
Hi Bob. Thanks for coming.

Annie is standing in the upstairs hallway, listening.

STEVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(sighs)
She's upstairs right now.

Annie takes this as her cue. She walks defiantly down the stairs. She arrives at the bottom, in the **FOYER.** Dr. Stetson acknowledges her with a big smile.

DR. STETSON
(warmly)
Hi Annie.

ANNIE
Dr. Stetson.

DR. STETSON
Can we all sit somewhere and talk?

ANNIE
(disdainful)
Yeah, let's make ourselves at home.

Annie sits in a chair in the corner. Dr. Stetson takes a chair and brings it nearer. Stetson sits across from Annie, without crowding her. (*A couple flies will be buzzing around throughout.*)

DR. STETSON
How's it going?

ANNIE
Not amazing.

DR. STETSON
Can you talk about why?

ANNIE
(blunt)
Uh - because my daughter is dead and now my psychiatrist husband is calling over his peers to investigate me.

Steve glowers.

DR. STETSON
Nobody's investigating you, Annie.

Annie just stares at him.

DR. STETSON (CONT'D)
Can I ask how you are?

ANNIE
I'm *fine*. I'm lucid. I'm in mourning and I'm trying to *cope*, and *he's* supposed to be my partner, so forgive me if I'm not bouncing off the walls to see you.

DR. STETSON
Nobody's trying to do anything against you right now, Annie. I promise you.

ANNIE
Then stop patronizing me please.

Stetson takes a long pause. He levels with her:

DR. STETSON
What's all this about ghosts? And seances?

ANNIE
(direct)
I thought I felt a presence. I was hopeful, as you can imagine. It was fleeting, and now I'm back to grieving. *

DR. STETSON
Okay... All right. *
(moving on) *
And why did you destroy your work, * Annie?

ANNIE
(turning back to Stetson)
Because it's my work.

Annie's eyes are stone. Brief pause.

DR. STETSON
(relenting) *
Fair enough. So I'm gonna ask you * some annoying questions now, Annie.
(making sure to not patronize)
I can *see* that you're lucid. This is just simply what I have to do. Okay?
(first question)
What day is it?

ANNIE
Tuesday.

DR. STETSON
When in the month?

ANNIE
February seventeenth.

137 **LATER** 137

Through the foyer window, we see Steve and Dr. Stetson OUTSIDE. This is from Annie's POV.

Dr. Stetson seems to be explaining something to Steve. Steve nods, frustrated. We see Dr. Stetson say "*I'm sorry, I can't*" and then he walks off to his car. Steve sulks back toward the house.

Steve enters. He looks at Annie.

ANNIE
What were you hoping? That I'd tell your psychiatrist friend that we brought back our dead daughter? You think I don't know how that sounds?

Steve nods, numb. He walks past her, toward the stairs. Annie pauses before following him up.

138 **INT. ANNIE'S WORKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER** 138

Steve has entered the workshop. He walks heavily around the ruins.

Annie steps in. Watches him.

STEVE
You worked so hard for this show.

ANNIE
Jesus Christ - *Fuck* the show. You're ignoring this!

STEVE
I'm not ignoring *any*thing - *believe* me.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
You ignore *everything!* If you can't find it in one of your books!

Long pause.

STEVE
(tensely, measuredly)
I won't indulge this behavior anymore.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
"Indulge"?

STEVE
I *won't*. I can't allow it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
"Allow" now! Jesus! Listen to how you're just *clinging!*
(pointing)
You're the one who's gonna go crazy, Steve. If you keep just *denying* what's in front of you.

Steve stares at her, overwhelmed. He looks down to notice at his feet: the figurine of Annie's Mother, holding out her breast. Steve lets out a defeated sigh.

STEVE
(tears building)
You know, Annie... You can still build a shrine to the terrible stuff. Doesn't mean you have to destroy anything good.

ANNIE
Well, it's *not* anything good. It's nothing. It means *nothing*. *This* -
(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(kicks a piece of wood)
- is what I cared about.

STEVE
Except for *that* one.

Steve is pointing out the pristine Graham House replica. He looks it over. Something makes him chuckle bitterly to himself.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Nice touch.

Annie looks at Steve, not understanding. She walks over to the miniature.

She sees that something has been ADDED to Peter's bedroom. A HEADLESS FIGURINE (now wearing Peter's clothes) is lying in Peter's bed. The color drains from Annie's face.

STEVE (CONT'D)
I was wondering when Peter would get switched with Charlie.

Off-screen, the phone RINGS. Steve leaves.

Annie is covering her mouth with her hands. She is having a horrible revelation. Her eyes then SCAN UP to notice something else...

The figurine of ANNIE (on her knees, face in her hands) is now in the ATTIC replica. The figurine is dressed in a NIGHTGOWN (the same one that Annie is wearing now), except its front is covered in blood.

In the distance, we hear Steve answer the phone.

STEVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hello?... *What? How long ago?...* Okay. Jesus. I'll be right there... Yeah, I'll leave right now. Okay. Thank you.

Steve hangs up. He takes a moment to gather himself. He then returns to the workshop.

STEVE (CONT'D)
I have to go to the hospital. One of my patients had an overdose.

Annie doesn't respond. She opens her mouth, petrified, but can't speak. Steve doesn't have the patience (or the nerve). He walks off to Peter's room.

139 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER** 139

Steve opens Peter's door. Peter is in the process of turning his standing mirror to face the wall.

STEVE
I have to run out. Will you be okay staying here?

PETER
Why? Where are you going?

STEVE
I'm running to the hospital and then I'm coming straight back.

Peter's eyes are wide with fear.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Do you have those two Ativan I gave you?

Peter digs two pills out of his pocket.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Good. Take them both if you need to.

Steve reaches into his pocket and pulls out another pill.

STEVE (CONT'D)
(handing pill to Peter)
And this'll help you to sleep.
(sternly)
If *any*thing happens, you call me. If you think something *might* happen, you *call* me. Okay?

140 **INT. STEVE'S CAR (DRIVING) - LATER** 140

Steve is at the wheel. He is rattled and extremely tense. He starts mumbling to himself:

STEVE
Always you - right, Steve? *You* have to hold it all together. That's *your* job. That's *your* life.

He pulls a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE from the glove compartment. He draws out TWO PILLS, but hesitates, resolving to only take ONE. He swallows it with bottled water.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Fuck you.

141 **INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT** 141

Through the open door of the workshop (whose lights are now off), Peter is seen TURNING OFF THE LIGHTS in his bedroom. He looks out into the hall, paranoid, and then shuts the door. Several FLIES adorn the hallway walls.

This was seen from ANNIE'S POV. She's sitting in the dark, among the wreckage of her work. She's still in shock over the inexplicable additions to the Graham replica.

142 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 142

The door is open. The lights are OFF. The sound of a PENCIL SCRATCHING PAPER is heard, although we can see that the room is completely empty.

143 **INT. WORKSHOP - SAME TIME** 143

Annie, still sitting in the dark, HEARS the faint sound of drawing.

She rises from her chair and approaches the **HALLWAY.** The sound of drawing persists. She follows it into...

144 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 144

Annie stands at Charlie's bedroom door. The SOUND OF PENCIL FEVERISHLY SCRATCHING PAPER. Annie hesitates before turning on the light.

CHARLIE'S DRAWING PAD rests on Charlie's bed. It's open to a mostly blank page, but a DRAWING IS MATERIALIZING on it. It is then FLIPPED (as if by wind) to the next page, where a new drawing begins. We can't yet see the content of the drawings.

Annie approaches the drawing pad to investigate. Her eyes, already buzzing with fear, now widen with HORROR.

145 **INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME** 145

More and more flies are collecting. They seem especially prominent around the ATTIC DOOR on the ceiling. They LINE its corners.

We PUNCH IN to an ECU of the flies. Their BUZZING now cacophonous.

146 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 146

The door is closed and the lights are off. Peter is in bed, trying to sleep. Silence, save for a buzzing fly. Then...

A CLICKING of the tongue. Peter's eyes OPEN. He slowly looks up, scanning past the bed, to SEE...

CHARLIE is standing in the dark corner of the room (where Peter mistook his hoodie for a person). Charlie stares at Peter with unblinking eyes. It's almost too dark to make her out. Another CLICK.

PETER
Charlie?

A long silence. Charlie slowly opens her MOUTH, but then her head DROOPS forward and rolls OFF her shoulders. It tumbles to the floor and rolls toward Peter, but when it rolls into a block of moonlight (cast from the window), it's revealed to be a Nerf basketball.

Peter glares at the ball. A quiet GROWLING is heard from the door. Peter looks up.

The door is now OPEN and Max stands in the doorway. He seems to be disturbed by Peter - or rather, by something standing *behind* Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)
(terrified)
What is it, Max?

Suddenly TWO HANDS materialize from behind Peter's head. They grab his face, grasping under his chin. They TUG BACK on his head, as if trying to yank it off. Peter SCREAMS.

Max runs in to attack, but the DOOR SLAMS IN HIS FACE.

147 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 147

Max paws aggressively at the door, barking wildly.

Suddenly, Max's HIND LEGS are lifted, as if by invisible hands, and TUGGED back by a great, vacuuming force. He is SUCKED across the hall and down the stairs. We FOLLOW the mortified dog as it's pulled all the way down to the **FOYER.**

The FRONT DOOR IS OPEN and Max is deposited violently out of the house. The door then SLAMS SHUT.

148 **EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS** 148

Max desperately tries to re-enter the house.

ANNIE (O.S.)
Peter! Peter!

149 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 149

Peter has just been released by the phantom hands. He's frantic. ANNIE is now standing in the room.

ANNIE
What's wrong, baby?! What happened?!

PETER
What are you *doing*?!

ANNIE
What do you mean?!

PETER
You were pulling on my head!

ANNIE
What?!

Peter looks terrified of her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
No I wasn't! I just came in! You were screaming!

Peter is crying.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
What happened?

PETER
I saw Charlie in the corner and then you started pulling on my head.

ANNIE
Peter! I would *never* do that to you! Are you crazy? I would *never* hurt you. How could you even think that?

Peter just stares at her through frightened tears.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...You saw Charlie in what corner?

Peter can't answer. He's horrified.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Listen to me, Peter. I don't know what's happening or what you just saw, but I'm stopping this. Do NOT tell dad what you just said to me. Please. It's NOT true. Something's going on, and I'm the only one who can stop this. Do you understand? I'm the only one who can *fix* it.

Peter stares unblinkingly at her.

150 **INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 150

Charlie's DRAWING PAD is open. We track slowly in, revealing the CONTENT of two of the drawings...

Both are crude, violently drawn sketches of PETER'S FACE, but the EYES are replaced with X's. The faces are framed by furiously sketched TRIANGLES.

A BREEZE blows in from the window, flipping to the NEXT PAGE - more of the same - and then the next page - still more of the same - and then the next page, etc...

Annie's HAND enters to seize the drawing pad. She leaves the room.

Max's barking persists in the b.g.

151 **INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT** 151

Annie has started a FIRE in the fireplace.

She clutches Charlie's drawing pad, gazing into the fire. She inhales deeply, holds her breath, and then THROWS the pad in. At first it resists the flames, but then, the EDGE of one sheet begins to BURN.

Annie watches this, eyes glued to the fire. But the shoulder of her SHIRT has sprouted the tiny beginning of a FLAME. It is the same size as the burgeoning flame at the drawing pad's edge. *Annie doesn't even notice*.

The flame spreads slowly along the drawing pad's edge. As this happens, the flame on Annie's shoulder SPREADS ALONG HER ARM. Annie notices this and panics. She desperately tries to stamp out the fire, but it's no use.

The fireplace-fire starts to CONSUME the edges of the drawing pad. Simultaneously, ANNIE'S ARM IS ENGULFED FOR A MOMENT IN FLAMES. The fire on her arm is mimicking the fire that's eating the book.

Annie SCREAMS, pulls the drawing pad out of the fire, and STAMPS OUT the flames. As she stamps it out, the fire on her arm is duly EXTINGUISHED.

Annie understands now.

152 **INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - HALLWAY - NIGHT** 152

Steve stands in the hallway of the ICU. He looks through the window of a hospital room, where two middle-aged PARENTS cry at the bedside of their unconscious SON (20s).

MIDDLE-AGED MOM
(sobbing)
Why did you do this? Why?

A NURSE comes by to tell Steve:

NURSE
You can go home, Dr. Graham. We have him under strict observation.

STEVE
Okay. I'll stay just a bit longer. Until they've left.

NURSE
Well, they're staying the night, and there's a limit of two people...

STEVE
Okay... All right.

NURSE
I'll let them know you wanted to stay, though.

They exchange smiles, and she leaves. Steve pulls out his phone and TEXTS Peter: *"Are you in bed?"*

Peter replies: *"yes"*

Steve texts *"did you take the Ativan?"*

Peter replies: *"yes"*

Steve texts *"Are you okay?"*

No answer.

Steve hesitates, then texts: *"They need me to stay the night here. Call me for anything. I love you."*

153 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - NIGHT** 153

The MOON hangs large over the house. We then SLAM CUT to **MORNING.** The moon has been replaced by a shrill SUN.

154 **INT. HALLWAY - MORNING** 154

Peter steps out of his bedroom, backpack slung over his shoulder. He clearly didn't sleep last night and his eyes are buzzing with anxiety. He looks down the hall at the workshop's DOOR, which is open by the faintest CRACK. He hesitates and walks off.

Behind the workshop door: ANNIE stares through the crack, making sure that Peter leaves.

155 **EXT. STREET - DAY** 155

Annie, looking frighteningly determined, runs to the front door of JOAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING. She's still wearing her nightgown (under a coat). She searches the intercom for Joan's name. She can't find it.

The front door OPENS and a man exits. Annie rushes in through the door before it can close. The Man looks back at her.

ANNIE
(explaining)
I'm going to see Joan. I couldn't find her on the buzzer.

The Man squints with suspicion and walks off.

Annie goes to the ELEVATOR and punches the button for the THIRD FLOOR.

156 **INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - THIRD FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER** 156

Annie emerges from the elevator and walks to JOAN'S DOOR. She knocks.

No answer.

Annie knocks again, more urgently.

157 **INT. JOAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 157

Nobody's home. We are pulling back from the DOOR (as Annie's knocking persists) to REVEAL the apartment...

It looks mostly the same, but it's now adorned in cloths and drapes that feature various SYMBOLS. We first notice the Satanic cross. Then an ornate sigil. This is the Sigil of PAIMON, and it can now be found all over the room.

The TABLE at which Annie and Joan performed the seance (which was then covered in a table-cloth) is now bare, revealing that the tabletop has a LARGE TRIANGLE carved into it (pointing east). Resting in the middle of the triangle is a PHOTO OF PETER. Beside this is an ATHAME (ritual dagger), a scattering of herbs, and *finally*...

A primitive DIORAMA (definitely made by *Charlie*). Standing center stage is a crude manikin of a human torso whose head is a SEVERED RAVEN HEAD. Atop the head is an aluminum-foil CROWN. Three other sculptures BOW ON THEIR KNEES to the raven-headed figure. Their heads are the severed PIGEON HEAD (now decomposing), a severed RAT HEAD and a severed SQUIRREL HEAD.

The floor is completely dressed in a clear plastic tarp. As we continue pulling back, we reveal great parts of the tarp to be smeared with DRIED BLOOD.

Annie's knocking continues.

158 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 158

Annie ceases knocking. She looks DOWN to notice that she's standing on...

The WELCOME MAT. "*JOANIE.*"

Annie's mind starts racing. She thinks for a moment and then - *it hits her!* Annie RACES back to the elevator.

A SCHOOL BELL RINGS, bridging our CUT TO:

159 **EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY** 159

LUNCH TIME. It's overcast, dark and windy. Students mill about in flapping clothes.

Just beyond the high school fence is a ROAD with heavy traffic. PETER is seated at an empty table near the fence, eating (or rather, *not* eating) the cafeteria food.

The TRAFFIC NOISE is loud and imposing. Peter LISTENS to it, losing himself in the white noise. But there's something looming <u>underneath</u> the traffic noise...

It's like a distant YELLING, but too distant to make out. Slowly it becomes clearer, more distinct. It's a WOMAN'S VOICE and it's yelling "*Peter.*"

Peter looks up. *Where is it coming from?*

WOMAN'S VOICE
(still vague)
...I expel you...!

Peter looks around. Soon his eyes settle on something...

Across the road, on a far sidewalk, JOAN is standing. She looks raving mad. She's staring *directly* at Peter and she's screaming like a lunatic.

JOAN
SATONY, DEGONY, EPARIGON!

Terrified, Peter rises from his seat. He looks around to see if anyone else is noticing this. Nobody is.

JOAN (CONT'D)
PETER!

Peter looks back at her. They MEET EYES.

JOAN (CONT'D)
GET OUT, PETER!

Peter breaks the gaze. He looks around, appealing to any/all of the circulating kids. It's clear that none of them see or hear this. *How is that possible?*

JOAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
PETER!!!

160 **INT. GRAHAM HOUSE - DAY** 160

We are viewing the UPSTAIRS FLOOR in WIDE - in diorama form. It's as if the front walls of the house have been removed. In fact, it looks exactly like ANNIE'S MINIATURE REPLICA, except that it *can't* be, because the hallway is swarming with FLIES (confirming the real-life scale).

Annie, having just returned from Joan's, arrives at the top of the stairs. She runs down the HALLWAY to enter the **WORKSHOP.**

Annie runs to the BOXES marked *"Mom's Things."* She opens the first box and finds a HAND-EMBROIDERED WELCOME MAT. It's the exact same style as Joan's! Embroidered into it is the name "*ANNIE*". Under that is another mat, bearing the name "*CHARLES*" and featuring the now-familiar sigil of PAIMON.

Annie goes to the next box. She dig through a collection of herbs and oils, and beneath those, she finds the same hardbacks from earlier: *NOTES ON SPIRITUALISM.* Below this, a couple other hardbacks: one that appears to be a GRIMOIRE (book of spells) and the other titled *INVOCATIONS.*

Annie flips through the first two books. They're all text. She now comes to *Invocations.* Its cover is an illustration of a monstrous beast with a tentacled face, and the book is filled with vivid etchings of DEMONIC POSSESSION RITUALS.

Annie goes to a MARKED PAGE. It features an illustration of a beastly man with a hulking body and a strangely effeminate face. He rides a dromedary and wears a crown. Behind him is a queue of frolicking demons, all headless and all playing instruments. A title reads "*King Paimon (God of Mischief).*"

Annie comes to the TITLE PAGE of the book. There is a handwritten NOTE. It reads:

My darling, dear, beautiful Annie,

Forgive me all the things I could not tell you, as I truly could not. Please don't ever hate me and try not to despair your losses. You will see in the end that they were worth it.

Our sacrifice will pale next to the rewards.

Love, Mommy *

Mortified, Annie throws the book into the box, and digs deeper to find TWO PHOTO ALBUMS, familiarly titled "*Memories*."

Annie flips through one of the albums. For a while, nothing of note. But then she FINDS something...

A PHOTO of ANNIE'S MOTHER, 20 years younger, standing with JOAN, also 20 years younger. They both wear the same NECKLACE - the one bearing the pyramid jewel, which Annie wore to her mother's funeral.

Stunned, Annie continues through the photo album. She finds SEVERAL MORE PHOTOS FEATURING JOAN, who's often standing in the background. *Always wearing the necklace.* She and Annie's Mother were evidently close friends.

Another photo: Annie's mother is guiding a baby bottle into BABY CHARLIE's mouth. But the bottle's milk is polluted with black herbs.

Finally, Annie comes to a particularly bizarre photo. It features Joan laying a handmade, silver CROWN onto Annie's Mother's head. Annie's Mother is weeping tears of joy. They are surrounded by an intimate, APPLAUDING audience.

161 **INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY** 161

Students are returning to class.

Peter walks trembling down the hall. Any lingering kids disperse to enter their classrooms. Peter approaches *his* classroom, a gnawing apprehension taking him over.

Suddenly, from behind Peter, a FLASH of light STREAKS across the length of the hall. It sweeps past Peter. He FREEZES.

The light seems to disappear at Peter's CLASSROOM. Peter stares at the door.

Through the classroom door's window, MR. DAVIES (the teacher) turns to see Peter. They lock eyes. Davies smiles expectantly.

Feeling pressured, Peter walks to the classroom. He ENTERS.

162 **INT. GRAHAM HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER** 162

The hallway is crawling with flies.

Annie, still holding the photo album, enters (from the Workshop) to investigate.

The ceiling's ATTIC HATCH is now covered in more flies than ever. It's clearly the source of the infestation.

Annie, eyes crazed with paranoia, stares at the hatch. A short (but accessible) rope hangs from it, asking to be pulled.

Annie pulls on the rope, slowly OPENING the attic hatch and releasing its retractable stairway. A HORDE OF FLIES escapes the attic.

Annie hesitates before climbing up.

163 **INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS** 163

The attic is dank and claustrophobic. There is one window, letting in scant moonlight. Otherwise, the space is obscured in utter darkness.

Annie pokes her head in. At the foot of the entrance is a FLASHLIGHT. Annie takes it, turns it on, and shines its beam into the shadows.

Flies are everywhere. Their buzzing permeates the room.

Waving away the flies, Annie explores the space. It's filled with discarded pieces of the family's past. Old cribs, a mattress, toys, etc.

Finally, Annie's FLASHLIGHT dawns on something. A FIGURE lying prostrate in the corner. Annie approaches it. The flies get louder. Annie finally gets close enough to SEE...

It is a WOMAN'S CORPSE, and upon closer inspection, its HEAD is seen to be MISSING. From the white and wrinkled hands, it's evident that this was an old woman. She is also wearing a WHITE SILK ROBE - *identical to the one that Charlie saw the corpse wearing earlier in the woods.* (Is this Ellen Leigh's corpse?) A large TRIANGLE has been drawn in chalk around the body.

Annie GASPS, staggers back, and bends over to RETCH. As she does so, the flashlight's beam crosses something on the VAULTED CEILING above the body. Annie pauses before raising the flashlight. She trains it on the ceiling to reveal...

THE SIGIL OF PAIMON has been painted onto the ceiling in now-dry BLOOD. Flies crawl across its coarse black-red strokes.

164 **INT. CLASSROOM - DAY** 164

Peter sits at the back of the class. He WRINGS his hands, anxiety mounting. He's still thinking about the woman (Joan) who was yelling at him.

Mr. Davies stands at the chalkboard.

MR. DAVIES
So, everyone feels justified: Iphigenia's murder was commanded by the gods - so really Agamemnon *had* no choice. And Clytemnestra is driven by revenge, just like Orestes when *he* returns...

Suddenly, Peter hears something behind him. A distant CLICKING of the tongue. We focus in on Peter's EAR. Separated by a few seconds each, the clicks become clearer and more present with every CLICK. *It's as if the source is nearing.* Soon it's loud enough to be RIGHT NEXT TO PETER'S FACE.

Suddenly, as seen from behind, PETER'S ARM SPIKES UP INTO THE AIR. Because we're behind him, we don't see Peter's face. The tense arm is HELD there, as if being pulled by an unseen force. The clicking sound continues.

Mr. Davies turns to notice Peter.

MR. DAVIES (CONT'D)
(calling on him)
Peter.

Mr. Davies waits, but after a moment, his expression darkens into concern.

MR. DAVIES (CONT'D)
Peter, are you okay?

We now reveal PETER. His face is CONTORTED with terrible stress, as if his head were gripped by an electric vice. His eyes are locked open; his eyeballs darting around, as if appealing for help. His hand remains stiffly raised and he seems to have difficulty breathing. In fact, his face is about to turn purple.

PETER CLICKS HIS TONGUE. *He's* now the one clicking.

MR. DAVIES (CONT'D)
Peter. What's wrong?

Bridget, staring at Peter, looks especially disturbed. Peter CLICKS again.

MR. DAVIES (CONT'D)
I...

Suddenly Peter GASPS a horrible, gurgling gasp. It sounds like an agonized SQUEAL, much like the one we heard from Charlie during her allergic attack (before her decapitation).

BRIDGET
(terrified)
Can he breathe?!

A spit-bubble forms on Peter's lips as he struggles hopelessly to speak. But then--

Peter's head is SLAMMED FACE-DOWN into his desk. It holds there, trembling with tension. His face is SMEARED across the desktop, as if a great pressure is being applied to the back of his head. One can almost hear Peter's nose CRUNCHING.

Peter's head suddenly swings back up, as if being YANKED by the hair. He is held upright for a moment, revealing that his eyes are pitch-red with tears. His nose is also bleeding lightly. He looks extremely disoriented.

PETER
MOM!

Peter's head is SLAMMED back down, into the table. Blood BURSTS out of his now-broken nose.

The class screams!

Peter, suddenly in possession of his faculties, KICKS himself back. He stumbles out of his chair, knocking over the desk as he staggers backward.

He has been RELEASED from whatever was just gripping him. He SCREAMS, throwing his arms around, fending off whatever it was. He breaks down in SOBS, fraught with terror.

The class is completely silent.

165 **INT. STEVE'S OFFICE - DAY** 165

Steve sits in his office, nursing a scotch. His haggard look confirms that he didn't sleep a wink last night.

Across the hall, JENNY is seen through her window. She looks at Steve, concerned. They awkwardly meet eyes. She smiles a strained, sympathetic "*hi*." He forces a very unconvincing *"hey"* smile.

Steve's cell phone VIBRATES. It's ANNIE.

He just stares at it. Letting it vibrate. It stops.

After a moment, the office phone RINGS. He looks at it. Thinks about answering. Doesn't.

He turns in his chair, raising the scotch to his lips. Ignoring the phone. He downs the glass.

We now reveal the office phone's CALLER ID. This call is coming from Peter's High School.

166 **INT. GRAHAM HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY** 166

The land-line rings. It's the high school, now calling the Graham house.

Nobody is home.

167 **INT. CAR - SAME TIME** 167

Annie sits in her car, parked on the street. She is waiting in the driver seat, eyes crazed. She watches the house, holding her cell phone at the ready.

A car drives by. She turns to investigate. It's not Steve.

ANNIE
(to herself)
Goddamn it, Steve. Come home.

168 **INT. STEVE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME** 168

Steve is still in his office, eyes closed, leaning back in his chair. Clinging to the peace.

The phone rings again. He sets his drink on the table and grudgingly answers.

STEVE
Hello?

Pause. Steve suddenly becomes alert.

STEVE (CONT'D)
What? What happened?

169 **INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER** 169

Steve is being led by a NURSE through a sterile ER hallway. They're approaching a room near the back.

NURSE
We had to sedate him. He was extremely upset.

STEVE
What did you give him?

NURSE
Haloperidol. It's the standard.

Steve nods. He knows.

They arrive at the ROOM. Peter lies in bed, asleep. His nose is HEAVILY BANDAGED and his eyes are black and blue.

STEVE
I don't understand. How was it self inflicted?

170 **INT. CAR (MOVING) - LATE AFTERNOON** 170

Steve is driving home. Peter is asleep in the back seat. Steve looks at the rear-view mirror while he drives. Watching his son sleep.

Steve looks back to the road to see -- *he's about to run a red light*. He STOMPS on the brake.

Despite the harsh stop, Peter remains asleep.

Steve grips the wheel, on the edge of his seat. A moment of tense silence and then: the floodgates open. Steve starts CRYING, overwhelmed. After a moment of this, he regains composure.

The light goes GREEN.

171 **INT. ANNIE'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON** 171

Annie is still waiting anxiously in her car.

Steve's car is seen pulling into the Graham driveway. Annie heaves a relieved sigh - "*finally!*" But then she notices that Steve is pulling an unconscious Peter out of the back seat. She sees Peter's BANDAGED NOSE and panics.

Annie runs out of the car and bounds over. She's gripping her mother's photo album.

ANNIE
Oh my God what happened?!

Steve turns to Annie as she arrives. He's in no mood for any histrionics. Annie GASPS at the sight of Peter's face.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Who did that?!

STEVE
He did apparently. Smashed his own face into his desk, hard enough to break it.

This only feeds Annie's paranoia. She covers her mouth with her hands.

ANNIE
(needing to tell him)
Steve...

STEVE
(blunt)
No: please: just take his feet.

Annie hesitantly gathers Peter's feet. Steve proceeds toward the house, carrying Peter by his underarms.

172 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - DAY** 172

Outside, Max's BARKING is heard. It will persist through the following scene.

Steve and Annie lay the comatose Peter into bed. Steve looks down at Peter, sapped. He's avoiding Annie's eyes.

ANNIE
Steve.

Steve waits for her to continue.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
...Upstairs, in the attic... When you were gone, I went up there.

Steve closes his eyes, not wanting to hear whatever's coming.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
There's a decapitated body. An old woman....

Steve's eyes open, numb. He looks blankly at Annie.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(reacting)
That's what all the flies are!

STEVE
(zero inflection)
A body?

ANNIE
Go upstairs. Look for yourself.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Whose body?

ANNIE
I think it might be my mother's. I *think!* I can't tell! The skin is black and she's all distended, but it's an old woman and the head is gone... Go see for yourself.

Steve STARES at her before walking into the hall and approaching the attic hatch.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
And then there's more.

STEVE
More than your mother's headless body. Of course.

Steve reaches for the attic hatch. He pulls it down and a mass of FLIES escapes.

Steve pauses, now much more nervous about what he's about to find. He begins to climb the stairs.

Annie now RUNS downstairs...

173 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS** 173

Annie rushes to the fireplace. She starts a FIRE.

Max's barking continues off-screen.

174 **INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER** 174

The hatch is still open. We hear from within the attic:

STEVE (O.S.)
Jesus fuck!

Annie has run back upstairs.

Sounds of distress (from above) as Steve rushes to the stairs and stumbles down into the hallway. He's pale with shock.

STEVE (CONT'D)
What the fuck!

ANNIE
There's more.

STEVE
Why haven't you called the police?!

ANNIE
The police can't help us!

This makes Steve pause. *Did Annie do this?*

STEVE
Who is that, Annie?

Annie squeezes her mother's photo album.

ANNIE
Do you remember the woman, Joan, my friend? Her grandson died and she took me to her apartment and she communicated with him?

Steve's eyes are harrowed.

STEVE
(to himself)
It did look like your mother.

ANNIE
Listen! She *taught* me how to do the seance. I didn't even *want* to know. But she brought her grandson *back*, and I *saw* it and I *felt* it. Just like *you* did with Charlie.

Steve eyes Annie with growing revulsion. She now opens the photo album. She's frighteningly energetic.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
This was my mother's album. Okay? Now look: this woman, right here, *that's* the woman! *That's* Joan!

Annie is pointing at a photo of Joan (20 years younger) standing with Annie's mother (20 years younger). Annie speaks quickly to prevent Steve from interrupting.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
She never mentioned knowing my mother and *I* never met her before, but she approached me, she consoled me, and she told me about the seance, she showed me how, and now - look:

Steve can't listen to this, but Annie desperately draws his attention to the photo of Annie's Mother being crowned by Joan. Annie points at the NECKLACE.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
That's the necklace my mom gave me. Right? It's my mother's necklace. *Right?*

Now Annie points out another photo: her mother posing with Joan - both wearing the same necklace.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
They're *both* wearing it. And they're wearing it in every photo of them!

Steve doesn't react. He's staring at Annie like she's a walking disease.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Now, I could always feel that that necklace was full of something. Remember? It's heavy? So I broke it open and now - look - it was full of *this*.

She holds up a ZIP-LOC BAG holding a small amount of BLACK ASH.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Smell that. It smells like *rot*. I almost *puked* from the smell.

Steve doesn't respond.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
And then, look what I found inside.

She shows him the inside of the cracked-open necklace. THE SIGIL OF PAIMON has been engraved into it.

Steve is completely pale.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
This was painted above the body. Did you see that? In the blood?

STEVE
(dawning on him)
...You dug up the grave.

ANNIE
What?

STEVE
It was *you*, wasn't it? When you were going out, "to the movies"?

ANNIE (CONT'D)
You're not even *listening!*

STEVE
(horrified)
And when the cemetery called...
(outraged at the thought)
I didn't tell you because I didn't want to *worry* you.

ANNIE
Goddamn it! LISTEN to me, Steve! I know you don't trust me - there's nothing I can do about that - but they put a curse on us, and when we brought back Charlie--

STEVE
We didn't bring back Charlie!

ANNIE
(continuing)
--we made a PACT with something! I don't know what it is, but it's in the house, and I don't know if it's Charlie or if it's something else, but it wants Peter!

Annie pulls out Charlie's DRAWING PAD. She opens it and flips through the sketches of Peter with his eyes X'd out.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I watched these pages fill. They're all of Peter.

She looks up at Steve.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Steve: I don't know what I did, but Peter's in danger and I'm the one who started this.

Annie takes Steve's arm. He recoils at his wife's touch. She leads him toward the STAIRS.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
If we destroy this book, it'll take me too. I tried to burn it - I tried - but my arm caught fire. On its own. As if I was *linked* to it -- because I *am* linked! I *know* that now. But if we *don't* destroy this...Peter will...

She's too overwhelmed to finish her thought. Steve's eyes register no compassion. He skeptically follows her down the stairs toward the **LIVING ROOM.**

ANNIE (CONT'D)
It needs to be me, Steve. It's my fault! I need you to throw it in the fire.

Steve just stares at her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I can't do it! I can't throw it in! I'm too scared.
(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)
But if *you* don't, it'll be Peter. I know it will.
(breaks down crying at the thought)
It'll be our son!

Annie puts the drawing pad in Steve's hand. She closes his fingers around it. She tries to calm herself down.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Please baby. I can't do it. I need you to throw it in the fire.

Annie takes a canister of LIGHTER FLUID and proceeds to DOUSE the drawing pad. She then looks at Steve with great love and sadness.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Even if you can't believe me: You're the love of my life.

Annie KISSES him passionately. It has the desperation of a farewell kiss. Steve's lips are stone.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I love you, Steve. I love you so much. And I love Peter so much!

Annie is crying hysterically. Max's barking continues.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Please! Throw it in! I love you!

Steve walks in a horrified daze toward the FIREPLACE. He stops at the fire, and turns to Annie.

STEVE
After I throw this in - I'm calling the police. You're very sick, Annie.

ANNIE
JUST PLEASE THROW IT IN!!

Steve THROWS the drawing pad into the fire. It is immediately CONSUMED by the flames, and then, like clockwork--

STEVE IGNITES INTO A RAGING BALL OF FLAMES. He cries out as he is instantaneously swallowed up by the screaming fire.

Annie can't even scream. She's frozen in horror. Her eyes are LOCKED on the sight of her husband's burning. Max's off-screen BARKING has reached an insane pitch.

We see Steve's searing reflection in Annie's fixed pupil. The fire is impossibly violent.

SLAM TO **BLACK**

A distant drumming fades in...

175 **EXT. WOODS - NIGHT** 175

The WOODED AREA behind the Graham house. It's snowing.

A drum circle seems to be in progress somewhere unseen. Repetitive, minimal PERCUSSION (like subdued war drums) thumps faintly and steadily in the distance.

176 **INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME** 176

Silence. Max's barking has STOPPED.

Peter's eyes blink OPEN from his deep sleep. He bolts up with a start. He's in his room, under the covers.

He squints with pain. He reaches to touch his nose, but discovers the heavy plaster bandage.

Outside Peter's window: the TREEHOUSE. A dim, golden light - like candlelight - flickers from within.

Peter stares at it. The drums are barely heard in the b.g. They will continue.

The drums are momentarily drowned out by the sound of a CAR DRIVING BY outside. Its HEADLIGHTS gently illuminate Peter's room, scanning the walls (in pale blue) as the car drifts by.

For the briefest moment, in this fleeting light, we see...

ANNIE, still wearing her nightgown, in the top corner of the room. She seems to be FLOATING WEIGHTLESSLY. She's so elevated, in fact, that her head is turned to the side and her cheek pressed against the ceiling. There's something still and composed about her; something resolutely NOT Annie. Her eyes are WIDE and her face expressionless. She's behind Peter, STARING at his back. He doesn't notice.

The car has now passed, and the room is obscured again in darkness. Annie is no longer visible.

Peter senses something behind him. He pauses, listens. Then he begins to TURN.

Annie, back pressed against the wall, scrambles (in a silent panic) across the wall and OUT the door. She seems to be CRAB-WALKING across the wall's surface.

Peter looks back *just* as Annie has left. He didn't see her.

Peter climbs out of bed. He goes to leave the bedroom.

177 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 177

As Peter enters the hallway, a SHARP CLANGING SOUND is heard downstairs. Peter freezes. A sustained REVERB fills the house. It sounded like it came from a piano.

Peter remains motionless, listening.

PETER
Dad?

Flies are everywhere.

Peter walks over to his parents' BEDROOM.

He peers in. It's empty.

He turns back to the hall.

PETER (CONT'D)
Mom? Dad?

Peter sees that the ATTIC HATCH is open. The SOUND OF FLIES is especially aggressive up there.

He then notices that ANNIE'S MOM'S BEDROOM DOOR IS OPEN. He looks inside. EMPTY. He closes the door.

Peter continues warily down the hall. He approaches the stairs.

PETER (CONT'D)
Hello?

Peter leans to peer down the stairs. He sees nothing. He slowly proceeds downward.

178 **INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS** 178

Peter arrives at the bottom of the stairs. The foyer is empty.

Peter notices the PIANO. It seems to have been tampered with. The lid is open and a couple of the wires have been SNAPPED.

Peter carefully walks through the foyer, eyes scanning around. Paranoia building.

He approaches the LIVING ROOM, which is faintly illuminated by an off-screen flame.

179 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS** 179

Peter stops at the doorway. His eyes travel across the walls to finally come to...

The FIREPLACE. The last of a dim fire (mostly embers) crackles in the pit. And lying before the fireplace is...

A CHARRED, BLACK CORPSE. It lies twisted on the rug.

Peter stands frozen, trying to discern what it is. He takes a reluctant step forward and slowly approaches the dark figure. Peter finally comes close enough to SEE...

The body's mouth is LOCKED open in a scream of agony. The white of its teeth stands in garish contrast to the crisped whole. The body is on its back, arched and contorted.

Peter looks at the HANDS. The fingers are curled into desperate claws. One finger bears STEVE'S WEDDING RING.

Peter opens his mouth to scream, but all that comes out is a muted gust of air. Tears well in his eyes. He can't even summon the strength to look away, but THEN--

An anguished MOAN bellows wretchedly from above Peter's head. Paralyzed with fear, he stops crying. After a moment, we reveal...

ANNIE floats behind Peter. Her prolonged moan dwindles to a stop, but her face remains twisted with grief. She holds PIANO WIRE, pulling it taut with both hands (drawing blood from her palms). She is slowly, steadily descending on Peter's frozen back.

Peter is too afraid to look back. But he can feel that something is moving toward him. He musters the courage to BEGIN turning back, but by this time, Annie has already arrived! She LOOPS THE PIANO WIRE AROUND HIS NECK!

Peter defensively scrunches his chin into his neck. He spins around, screaming. ANNIE WAILS IN TERROR.

She pulls the piano wire back, SKINNING Peter's chin. Annie swiftly reels back - as if being SUCKED UPWARDS by a vacuuming force. Her SCREAM fills the house.

Blood streams from the small-but-deep cut on Peter's chin. He stares up at his mother with horrified eyes.

Annie looks like a frightened animal. She is huddled up into a corner of the ceiling. She is shaking her head - "*no, no, no, no, no*" - as if pleading with Peter. Her fists tighten around the piano wire. Wringing blood.

PETER
(crying)
Mommy.

Annie SCREAMS and quickly DESCENDS on Peter.

Peter runs SQUEALING out of the room. He sprints for the STAIRS. Annie chases after him.

Peter bounds up the stairs, but at the top step, he trips over his own foot. He crashes to his knees, scrambling to get back up. Annie SWOOPS down on him. He manages to sprint off *just* before she can seize him.

Peter races madly through the **HALLWAY.** He dashes for the ATTIC STAIRS.

He runs up the stairs and immediately RETRACTS them - just as Annie reaches him. Peter manages to pull the attic hatch SHUT, *almost* catching Annie's bloody fingers.

180 **INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS** 180

Peter LOCKS the floor's hatch. There is a mad POUNDING from beneath.

181 **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 181

Annie is UPSIDE DOWN and straddling the ceiling (as though gravity were no longer a thing). She pulls at the attic knob, SLAMMING her head into the hatch.

She bangs her head crazily against the ceiling, over and over. With every strike, she POUNDS her forehead harder and more wildly against the hatch - like a mad bull, trying to break through by sheer force.

182 **INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS** 182

Peter stands in the dark, screaming and crying as the pounding persists. It keeps growing *harder, faster, more insane* - until it STOPS.

Peter listens... Nothing. Just the shrill cacophony of buzzing flies. Beside him, at his feet, is a dwindling BLACK CANDLE.

PETER
(terrified)
Mom?

Peter looks up. BLACK CANDLES HAVE BEEN SET UP ALL AROUND THE ATTIC. Their flames dimly illuminate the clutter.

Peter now looks to the CORNER that earlier enshrined the headless corpse. *

The corpse is now gone, but something has replaced it. The distance and weak light preclude Peter from identifying it. *

Peter begins to approach the corner, tears streaming. He sees the bloody sigil on the vaulted ceiling above. As he walks, the buzzing gets LOUDER, more concentrated. *

Peter continues warily toward the corner, his fear rising. The buzzing has gotten even louder. Finally Peter gets close enough to SEE... *

In the center of the chalk-etched triangle is MAX'S DECAPITATED HEAD. This rests atop FOUR SEVERED DOG'S LEGS, which serve to support the head's weight. The legs are positioned to look almost like spider legs. * * * *

Peter REELS back, knocking over a candle. The corner goes dark. Peter is weeping uncontrollably now. He starts backing away, toward the room's center. His eyes remain glued to Max's head. *

PETER (CONT'D)
(to himself, crying)
Please. This isn't happening. You need to wake up.

Peter's teeth are chattering. He's hyperventilating. His trembling silhouette is framed by the WINDOW behind him. Outside the window: dreamy snowfall.

Peter continues backing up, but something makes him FREEZE. A prolonged GROAN, accompanied by the sound of WIRE being wrapped and tightened around FLESH. It's coming from a source about twenty feet away, BEHIND him. This is followed by a swifter, HARSHER SOUND - like a saw being dragged through flesh. A pregnant PAUSE and then the sound REPEATS. A briefer pause and it REPEATS again.

Peter slowly turns around. His eyes travel up to SEE...

ANNIE has somehow gotten in. She floats weightlessly in the air. (*She is faintly illuminated by a candle below her.)* She has looped the PIANO WIRE around her own NECK, which is already straining blood. She TUGS on one end of the wire. It SAWS through her neck. She TUGS on the other end of the wire. It saws even deeper.

PETER (CONT'D)
Mommy!

Annie keeps sawing, FASTER and HARDER and with more ruthless persistence. The sawing sound is horrible. Peter, screaming, TURNS away, only to see:

A MIDDLE-AGED BLONDE MAN, dressed in a red cloak, near Peter. He's SMILING giddily. (*We will recognize him as the man who was smiling at Charlie at Annie's mother's funeral.*) Behind him, two SMILING OLDER WOMEN. They are crouched together, illuminated by a nearby candle-flame. * * *

Peter SCREAMS, turns, and runs straight for the WINDOW. HE JUMPS <u>THROUGH</u> THE GLASS.

183 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS** 183

Peter has landed face-first into the SNOW. Small shards of glass are embedded all over his body, but nothing too serious. *

Peter lies motionless for a long time.

We cut WIDE to a BIRD'S EYE VIEW looking down on Peter. He lies face-down in the blue-white snow, inanimate. The wind blows softly.

We HOLD on this peaceful, static wide. After a moment, a SHADOW floats gracefully across the snow. It belongs to Annie, who must be above us - but the shadow *seems* to have no head.

The shadow drifts out of frame. After a moment, Peter's head RISES languidly from the snow.

Peter's face is marked by a few minor GASHES (from the glass). He looks up, EYES STRANGELY CALM. They even look a bit clouded. He looks ahead to the TREEHOUSE...

PETER'S POV: Annie's floating body has arrived at the treehouse, which is still glowing by candlelight. She is ascending into it. For a split-second, before she disappears into the treehouse, we see that ANNIE HAS NO HEAD.

Peter rises to his feet, hollow-eyed. He begins walking slowly toward the treehouse. He seems to be in some sort of TRANCE - *much like the trance that Charlie entered earlier.*

As Peter nears the treehouse, he looks up to its OPEN WINDOW...

Through the window, from Peter's low-angle POV: a birdcage hangs from the treehouse ceiling. It houses a manic WHIPPOORWILL.

We cut to a WIDE of the treehouse as Peter arrives at the tree's base.

Peter pauses. Looks up. After a beat, he begins to leadenly climb up.

184 **INT. TREEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS** 184

Peter, having scaled the tree, pokes his head through the floor-hatch and climbs in.

The walls are lined with black candles, and behind Peter, several MEN AND WOMAN (some elderly, some middle-aged, a few in their 20s/30s) are BOWING on their knees, foreheads against the floor. They are all dressed in RED CLOAKS.

Standing before Peter (on the opposite side of the treehouse) is the *terrible object of their reverence*...

A GIANT, 6' WOOD-FIGURE MANIKIN. Placed atop its shoulders (in lieu of a head) is CHARLIE'S DECAPITATED HEAD - now in an advanced state of decomposition. The nose is still smashed in, much of the face is black with rot, and it wears a silver CROWN. One hand grips a wooden SCEPTER. The manikin's other hand is raised to extend its first two fingers and thumb; the third and fourth fingers are bent (like a Christ figure).

Bowing at the foot of the manikin is ANNIE'S HEADLESS TORSO - blood pooling at the neck.

Beside her corpse, also prostrated, is ANNIE'S MOTHER'S HEADLESS CORPSE (still dressed in white silk, but in a worse state of decay). And next to Annie's mother's body is MAX'S HEADLESS, ARMLESS TORSO. The dog's legs have been replaced by wooden chair legs. Max's backside is raised as he also BOWS (front "legs" on the floor, hind "legs" stretched).

Peter's eyes are WIDE, but still blank. They are FIXED on Charlie's head. Peter looks more confused than horrified.

He turns around to face the groveling red-cloaked worshippers. They now seem to be bowing in *Peter's* direction.

Among the worshippers is JOAN - her forehead pressed to the floor.

Peter, unnerved, looks away. He notices...

A photo portrait of ANNIE'S MOTHER on the wall. She sits upright and her expression is severe. The frame bears an engraving: "*Queen Leigh*"

We come to a CLOSE-UP of Peter. He looks confused and scared (although not in a way that feels like *Peter*). *We will HOLD on this CU for the remainder of the scene.*

Off-screen, the sound of someone RISING. This person (Joan) shuffles past Peter to lift the crown off of Charlie's head. Joan then comes to Peter and stands before him (off-screen).

The CROWN is ceremoniously placed onto Peter's head. Peter TENSES up, avoiding eye contact with Joan. He SENSES something behind him. He looks back to see...

The headless corpses of his family are now inexplicably bowing in *his* direction.

Peter turns forward again - overwhelmed. He looks trapped. Trembling. His milky eyes are welling with tears.

JOAN (O.S.)
(quietly, trying to soothe)
No no - hey - it's okay... It's all right now.

But he is starting to PANIC. His eyes fix fearfully to the floor as his breathing grows erratic. Then:

JOAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Charlie.

Peter's breathing HALTS. He looks up to Joan, still trembling. Eyes wide.

Silence from Joan.

A long pause as Peter searches Joan's face for understanding. Peter finally SPEAKS...*but he sounds more like CHARLIE than Peter*.

PETER
Who am I?

A loaded silence from Joan. Then:

JOAN (O.S.)
You are Paimon. One of the eight Kings of Hell.

Beat. Peter doesn't react. He just stares at her, uncomprehending.

JOAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
We have looked to the northwest and called you in. We abjure the Trinity and pray devoutly to *you,* great Paimon: give us your knowledge of all secret things and all mysteries of the Earth; bring us honor, wealth and good familiars; let all earthly forces serve us in solemn obedience; and bind all men to our Will, as we have bound ourselves for now and ever to Yours.

We hear Joan return to her bowing position:

JOAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hail Paimon.

Peter's eyes are buzzing.

Then, from behind Joan:

WORSHIPPERS (O.S.)
Hail Paimon!

Then, louder:

JOAN/WORSHIPPERS (O.S.)
Hail Paimon!!

185 **EXT. TREEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS** 185

WIDE of the treehouse.

WORSHIPPERS (O.S.)
Hail!!

CUT HARD TO **BLACK.**

From black, we **VERY SLOWLY FADE IN ON:**

186 **EXT. GRAHAM HOUSE - NIGHT** 186

A neutral wide of the Graham House, surrounded by dreamy snowfall. A strong artifice distinguishes the image. As if the actual house has somehow been replaced by its MINIATURE REPLICA. Even the drifting snowflakes look false.

Hold on this as the CREDITS roll.